

VIRGIL'S FIRST EASTER

by Eddie McPherson



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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Virgil's First Easter

A dinner theatre comedy
for the Lenten season

by Eddie McPherson

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Virgil's First Easter is a dinner theatre presentation featuring a four-course meal. You should allow approximately two hours for the play with dinner. The dramatic action is interspersed with the dining as follows:

Guests arrive
Welcome by host/hostess
Prayer by pastor

Scene 1

Appetizers and punch
Scene 2

Salad
Scene 3

Entrée
Scene 4
Scene 5
Scene 6
Scene 7

Dessert and coffee
Scene 8
Scene 9

Concluding remarks and/or benediction by pastor

CAST OF CHARACTERS

VIRGIL

A simple guy who is a new Christian

MARGARET

Virgil's girlfriend

MRS. TISHWATER

The town's foremost hypocrite

TISHA

Mrs. Tishwater's spoiled daughter

JASON

A Christian who befriends Virgil and Margaret

REVEREND DAVIS

A sincere pastor of First Church of Springdale

MR. WILSON

The church's music director

VOICE

Heard but not seen, devil who is boss of Tabor and Halgan

TABOR

A dumb demon out to discourage Virgil (male or female)

HALGAN

Another demon (male or female)

FIRST BOY

Runs around making mischief (small role)

SECOND BOY

A friend to First Boy #1 (small role)

SERVER

A friendly woman at the local café (small role)

VIRGIL'S MOTHER

Appears in Mrs. Tishwater's dream (small role)

VIRGIL'S FATHER

Also appears (small role)

EXTRAS

If desired can be used in the church, café, dream, and park scenes. Virgil's three siblings, brother Leroy and sisters Burma and Thelma, may be introduced in the dream scene (nonspeaking roles).

SUPPORT PERSONNEL

The following persons, though not part of the drama, are vital to the overall success of the evening.

KITCHEN HELPERS

Organizers and cooks to plan the menu and prepare the meal.

WAITERS/WAITRESSES

Serve the meal in courses and attend to the guests' needs.
For added fun, they may dress alike — e.g., white shirts,
black pants, black bow ties.

HOST/HOSTESS

Greets the guests and gives the welcome. May also assist the kitchen staff.

PASTOR

Prays before the meal and concludes the evening.

PRODUCTION NOTES

SYNOPSIS: Virgil and Margaret are simple people who are new Christians and are looking for a church home. The week before Easter, they attend First Church of Springdale. Little do they realize this is the dwelling place of Mrs. Tishwater, “the foremost hypocrite alive in that town.” Tabor and Halgan, two demons on a mission, take it as an assignment from their “boss” to make sure Virgil and Margaret are discouraged by Mrs. Tishwater with the help of her spoiled daughter, Tisha. Meanwhile, Jason, another member of First Church, befriends the two newcomers, hindering Mrs. Tishwater’s goal to make sure Virgil and Margaret don’t show up at the church on Easter Sunday. When Tisha devises a plot to rid the church at last of the the two outcasts, it seems Satan’s work is accomplished, until a compassionate prayer is lifted by Jason, and Virgil and Margaret understand what true Christian love is for the first time. When Easter Sunday arrives, Mrs. Tishwater and Tisha and Virgil and Margaret all celebrate the most important day of the year together.

CHARACTERIZATION AND COSTUMES: Because this play is somewhat satirical, the characters should be exaggerated but not melodramatic. Mrs. Tishwater is the epitome of all hypocrites, Tisha represents all spoiled children, Virgil and Margaret mirror simple people who look at life as an adventure and aren’t bogged down with the picture most people paint of “success.” Reverend Davis is a compassionate person who truly wants Virgil and Margaret to feel welcome in his church. The comedy works best when Virgil and Margaret react to the hostility around them with childlike innocence, not understanding why anyone would even want to be cruel to someone else. Demons Tabor and Halgan are dolts.

Margaret and Virgil dress simply in drab colors. Their clothes are shabby but not dirty. Both wear thick black-rimmed glasses. In contrast Mrs. Tishwater and Tisha’s clothes are flamboyant — they are dressed to impress. They also need bathrobes. Their Easter attire should be flashy, with an Easter hat with flowers attached for Mrs. Tishwater. Tabor and Halgan may be dressed in all red or all black. The other characters dress normally. Reverend Davis should wear whatever your church’s pastor normally wears (robe, suit, clerical collar, etc.) The characters should have coats.

PROPS**Scene 2**

Bibles, songbooks, notepad (Mrs. Tishwater), handkerchief (Reverend Davis), cell phone (Mrs. Tishwater), hymnal (Mr. Wilson)

Scene 3

Five menus and order pad (server), a single rose in a vase for each table (optional)

Scene 5

A book, a bottle of aspirin, a glass of water, a small white veil (Tisha), small bouquet of plastic flowers (Tisha), suitcases (Virgil and Margaret), confetti (Virgil's parents)

Scene 6

A shoe box (Margaret)

Scene 8

Telephone (Tisha), hand mirror (Tisha), plate of sandwiches, a large envelope (Jason)

Scene 9

Same as scene 2, Easter lilies (optional), clipboard with notes (Halgan)

SIMPLE STAGING OPTIONS

The set is an empty stage area. All you will need to set up the scenes are: 1. Folding chairs. 2. A music stand or lightweight lectern. 3. Two card tables. 4. A couple of fake plants. 5. A floor lamp. 6. A small telephone table. 7. Two stools.

You might choose to use a colored cutout of a stained glass window for the church scene, a sign that reads “Today’s Special” for the café scene, and simple arrangements of Easter lilies for the Easter Sunday scene (optional).

THE CHURCH: The church should have a chair (folding chairs are fine) for each person On-stage, with a cutout of a stained glass window (optional) hanging on the back curtain or on a stand and a lightweight lectern or music stand for Reverend Davis. Margaret, Virgil, and Jason should sit on the front row Stage Right with optional extras sitting behind them. Make sure they sit at an angle so the audience can see them clearly. Mrs. Tishwater and Tisha should sit Center Stage apart from everyone else. Mr. Wilson’s and Reverend Davis’ chairs can sit next to the lectern Stage Left.

THE CAFÉ: Two card tables, one Stage Right and one Stage Left, are brought out covered with red and white checked tablecloths. A small lightweight plant sits between the two tables. An optional sign that reads “Today’s Special” may be added.

THE DREAM SEQUENCE IN MRS. TISHWATER’S HOME: You need nothing more than an easy chair (or folding chair covered with a throw) sitting Stage Right with a small table sitting on one side and a floor lamp sitting on the other. Keep the other side of the stage open for the “wedding” scene. Reverend Davis may choose to bring his lectern out with him and conduct his ceremony from behind it.

THE PARK SCENE: A small bench (or four folding chairs placed side by side) sit(s) center Stage. Two lightweight plants are placed on either side of the bench.

TISHA’S LIVING ROOM: If you use the easy chair in the dream scene, bring it back out for this scene (or the chair

covered with the throw) Stage Right. Four chairs pushed together and covered with a throw may act as a sofa Center Stage. A small coffee table (or a piano bench works well) sits in front of the “sofa” where the refreshments are placed.

THE CHURCH SCENE ON EASTER SUNDAY: The last scene is back inside the church, set up as in the first scene. If available, a couple of simple arrangements of Easter lilies might be added and placed in a prominent place On-stage since this scene takes place on Easter morning.

TABOR AND HALGAN: After a scene has been set up, simply have Tabor and Halgan stand in front of it to talk to their “boss.” If a spotlight is available, use it here.

SUGGESTIONS ON SCENE CHANGES

Scene changes should be very quick and may be accomplished with these hints:

After the church scene, each character returns to take his/her chair Off-stage while two people bring the two card tables in. Five chairs should remain to sit around the tables. The plant brought in should be lightweight. If a "Today's Special" sign is used, simply have it resting on an easel. Tabor and Halgan sit on a couple of stools Stage Right as they watch the action On-stage.

After the café scene, each character takes his/her chair off as the server and another actor/stage manager removes the tables and plant. One chair is left On-stage for Mrs. Tishwater's easy chair covered with a throw or sham (or an actual easy chair may be used) and a small table and floor lamp are placed on either side of the chair, etc.

You get the idea. The important thing is to have a plan so everyone knows what to take off and take on after each scene. Once a plan is in place, each scene change should take no more than thirty seconds. Play appropriate music for these changes. It's OK if the audience sees these scene changes taking place. Several of the scene changes take place when the next meal course is being served.

Remember, simple is OK. Let the stained glass cutout or the simple props such as the lectern, floor lamp, or checkered tablecloths put your audience in a particular setting. Audiences are great at filling in the rest using their imagination. The story will be just as effective using this simple staging technique. (And a heck of a lot cheaper!)

ACT I
SCENE 1

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(TABOR and HALGAN enter looking rather nervous. As soon as they enter, a deep voice is heard.)

VOICE: Tabor? Halgan?

TABOR: We're here, sir.

VOICE: Stand before me.

HALGAN: Yes, your majesty.

VOICE: Worship me.

BOTH: *(Bowing on their knees)* Yes, your majesty.

VOICE: Now stand! There's work to be done. A ghastly thing has happened.

TABOR: What's that, Master?

VOICE: Another conversion, that's what.

HALGAN: That's terrible, sir.

VOICE: I know that's terrible.

TABOR: What can we do to help you, oh mighty one?

VOICE: This new convert is very sincere. We can't allow him to get a good start on his spiritual journey. With Easter Sunday just around the corner, he stands a great chance of being encouraged.

HALGAN: *(Getting excited, rubbing his hands together)* Just name it, sir. You want us to push him in front of a speeding car?

TABOR: Yeah, or allow him to accidentally drop the hair dryer in the bathtub?

VOICE: No, we're not allowed to harm him. You must discourage him instead. Put him in the path of someone who will bring him down!

TABOR: What do you mean, sir?

VOICE: We must put him in the path ... of a hypocrite.

HALGAN: *(Laughing)* Good idea, sir.

VOICE: I've arranged everything. This new convert will be attending First Church of Springdale this Sunday.

1 **TABOR:** First Church of Springdale?
2 **TABOR and HALGAN:** (*Looking at one another and smiling,*
3 *saying together*) Mrs. Tishwater!
4 **TABOR:** Sir, we can't miss with Mrs. Tishwater on our side.
5 She's the foremost hypocrite alive in that town.
6 **HALGAN:** What's the convert's name, your majesty?
7 **VOICE:** Virgil.
8 **BOTH:** Virgil? (*They laugh.*)
9 **VOICE:** Listen! We don't have any time to lose.
10 **HALGAN:** Yes sir!
11 **VOICE:** Virgil is excited about his new faith. We've got to nip
12 his enthusiasm in the bud.
13 **TABOR:** In the bud, yes sir!
14 **VOICE:** You will find all the details on your way up to earth.
15 (*Pause*) Don't just stand there, get busy!
16 **BOTH:** (*Bowing on their knees*) Thank you, master. Thank you,
17 your majesty. Thank you, sir ...
18 **VOICE:** Go! (*TABOR and HALGAN rise and stumble around*
19 *each other, trying to get out. Appetizers and punch are served*
20 *at this time.*)

SCENE 2

24 *(The lights come up on the church. It's a very simple set using*
25 *folding chairs for the pews Stage Right. A simple lectern or*
26 *music stand sits Stage Left with a couple of chairs sitting on*
27 *either side. A stained glass window hangs on the upstage wall.*
28 *If you're using extras, have a few people who are already sitting*
29 *in some of the chairs. Others come in throughout the first scene*
30 *and fill up the chairs by the time REVEREND DAVIS begins*
31 *his sermon. MRS. TISHWATER is standing at Center Stage,*
32 *speaking with MR. WILSON.)*

33 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Now, remember Mr. Wilson, don't hit the
34 piano keys so harshly. Treat them with much
35 tenderness and allow your fingers to glisten across the

- 1 keys. The piano is not meant to be banged upon. Can
2 you remember that?
- 3 MR. WILSON: Yes, Mrs. Tishwater.
- 4 MRS. TISHWATER: I want my song to be delicate and
5 feminine — like I am.
- 6 MR. WILSON: You always do a wonderful job on the worship
7 special, Mrs. Tishwater.
- 8 MRS. TISHWATER: Of course I do. That is, if one certain
9 piano player glistens instead of pounds, if you know
10 what I mean.
- 11 MR. WILSON: *(Smiling and talking through his teeth)* I know
12 exactly what you mean. *(TABOR and HALGAN enter Stage*
13 *Left as everyone On-stage freezes. They're tiptoeing.)*
- 14 HALGAN: Hey, Tabor. I just realized I'm hungry.
- 15 TABOR: Shhh. Quiet you.
- 16 HALGAN: *(Rubbing his stomach)* Mmmm, I sure could go for a
17 chili dog with extra jalapeno peppers and hot sauce.
- 18 TABOR: Keep you mind off food and on the task at hand.
- 19 HALGAN: Where's Mrs. Tishwater?
- 20 TABOR: *(Pointing)* There she is, that little sweetheart.
- 21 MRS. TISHWATER: *(Unfreezing and crossing to REVEREND*
22 *DAVIS, who is standing beside his lectern checking notes for*
23 *his sermon)* Reverend Davis?
- 24 REVEREND DAVIS: Yes, Mrs. Tishwater?
- 25 MRS. TISHWATER: Mr. Wilson and I were rehearsing my
26 solo early this morning, and I was wondering if the
27 piano had been tuned recently. I did suggest that in the
28 last business meeting, you know.
- 29 REVEREND DAVIS: Yes, Mrs. Tishwater, but the budget
30 was somewhat limited last month. We bought those
31 fruit baskets for the widows in the hospital ...
- 32 MRS. TISHWATER: *(Cutting him off)* Reverend Davis, don't
33 you know how much money I contributed to this church
34 last year?
- 35 REVEREND DAVIS: No, Mrs. Tishwater.

1 MRS. TISHWATER: Let's just say I was generous. I gave all
2 the money, and what do you do but spend it on hard
3 apples for old ladies with no teeth. Now, all I'm asking
4 for is just an occasional checkup on the piano. Does
5 that seem too much to ask?

6 HALGAN: (*To TABOR*) Boy, the boss has done a good job on
7 this one.

8 TABOR: Shhh. I can't hear.

9 REVEREND DAVIS: I see your point, Mrs. Tishwater. I'll see
10 that we get someone in here this week. (*TISHA, MRS.*
11 *TISHWATER's spoiled daughter, runs in and crosses to her*
12 *mother.*)

13 TISHA: Mummy! Oh, Mummy, it was dreadful.

14 MRS. TISHWATER: Tisha, darling, you mustn't run in the
15 sanctuary. It's not ladylike. Stand up straight, dear.
16 What's everyone going to think with you running
17 around here like someone who is common and
18 ordinary?

19 TISHA: But Mummy, I'm so upset.

20 MRS. TISHWATER: Calm down and tell Mummy all about it.

21 TISHA: Well, you know we had tryouts last Sunday for
22 youth choir solos and, well, I looked on the bulletin
23 board this morning for the results, and my name wasn't
24 there! (*She cries on her MOTHER's shoulder.*)

25 MRS. TISHWATER: What? My Tisha's name is not on the
26 solo list?

27 TISHA: (*Stomping her foot*) I want to sing a solo, Mummy! If I
28 can't sing a solo, I won't sing at all.

29 HALGAN: (*To TABOR*) This is going to be too easy.

30 TABOR: You're telling me.

31 MRS. TISHWATER: Of course you'll get a solo, my dear.
32 Mummy will see to that.

33 TISHA: But how, Mummy? But hooowww?

34 MRS. TISHWATER: Don't you worry your pretty little head
35 one bit, my sweet. Just take a seat and dry your eyes.

- 1 Those salty tears are not good for your complexion.
 2 **TISHA:** You promise?
 3 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I promise. *(Two BOYS enter laughing.)*
 4 **FIRST BOY:** Here's a good joke. What's black and slimy and
 5 sinks to the bottom of the ocean?
 6 **SECOND BOY:** I don't know, what?
 7 **FIRST BOY:** Mrs. Tishwater in a wet suit. *(He turns and there*
 8 *stands MRS. TISHWATER.)*
 9 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I heard that, young man. *(Taking a pad*
 10 *from her purse)* Who's your mother?
 11 **FIRST BOY:** My mother?
 12 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Yes, your mother. Who-is-your-mother?
 13 **FIRST BOY:** *(Scratching his head)* I'm an orphan.
 14 **SECOND BOY:** Orphan? *(FIRST BOY punches SECOND BOY.)*
 15 Oh, he's an orphan.
 16 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(To SECOND BOY)* What is your name?
 17 **SECOND BOY:** My name?
 18 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Your name! What-is-your-name?
 19 **SECOND BOY:** *(Thinking quickly)* Uh, Harry ...
 20 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Writing this in her notebook)* Harry. Last
 21 name?
 22 **SECOND BOY:** Head.
 23 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Still writing)* Harry Head. *(The BOYS run*
 24 *away, exiting. She turns and yells after them.)* You just wait!
 25 I'll find out who your mothers are. We don't need your
 26 kind around here! This is the house of the Lord! We
 27 should act respectfully! Doesn't anyone know how to
 28 act respectfully anymore?! *(She realizes she is shouting and*
 29 *everyone is looking at her. She's suddenly embarrassed. She*
 30 *collects herself and takes a seat.)*
 31 **HALGAN:** *(Laughing)* What a hypocrite! *(To TABOR)* Hey,
 32 where's this Virgil?
 33 **TABOR:** Look, there he comes now! *(VIRGIL and MARGARET*
 34 *enter. They are in awe about anything in life. When they walk*
 35 *in, they begin looking around with mouths opened.)*

- 1 VIRGIL: Gosh, Margaret. Look at this fancy-lookin' church.
2 MARGARET: Virgil, I feel a little out of place.
3 VIRGIL: Shoot, Margaret, you don't have to feel out of place
4 here. This is a church. Everybody loves everybody in
5 here.
6 MARGARET: (*Looking at all the people who are staring at her*)
7 Everybody sure is dressed up.
8 VIRGIL: Don't worry about that, Margaret. You're the most
9 beautiful girl in this whole church.
10 MARGARET: Thank you, Virgil. (*Seeing a couple of chairs at the*
11 *front*) Maybe we need to sit down.
12 VIRGIL: OK. (*They take a seat.*)
13 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Crosses to VIRGIL and MARGARET.*)
14 Excuse me, but if you're looking for the homeless
15 shelter, it's on the other side of town.
16 VIRGIL: (*Brightens up and turns to MARGARET.*) See,
17 Margaret, didn't I tell you these people would be nice?
18 They're already askin' us to help the homeless people
19 on the street. (*To MRS. TISHWATER*) Thanks anyway,
20 ma'am, but we'll just wait 'til after church.
21 MRS. TISHWATER: After church? You don't mean you're
22 going to stay ... excuse me. (*Rushes over to REVEREND*
23 *DAVIS.*) Reverend Davis! We have a big problem on our
24 hands!
25 REVEREND DAVIS: What's that, Mrs. Tishwater?
26 MRS. TISHWATER: Over there, on the front pew. What do
27 you see? (*VIRGIL and MARGARET are waving to people*
28 *behind them.*)
29 REVEREND DAVIS: I see two new people visiting our
30 church.
31 MRS. TISHWATER: What are we going to do?
32 REVEREND DAVIS: Do?
33 MRS. TISHWATER: Yes. We can't very well have them
34 sitting in here, can we?
35 REVEREND DAVIS: Why not?

- 1 MRS. TISHWATER: Why not? It's obvious by their attire that
2 they have wandered in here by mistake.
- 3 REVEREND DAVIS: It's about time to start the service, so if
4 you'll excuse me.
- 5 TISHA: (*Running over to VIRGIL and MARGARET and pointing*
6 *at them*) Mummy, what's that?
- 7 VIRGIL: (*Standing*) My name's Virgil, and this is my
8 girlfriend Margaret.
- 9 TISHA: (*Pointing at MARGARET*) Oh Mummy, look. Her dress
10 is preposterous.
- 11 MARGARET: (*Looking down at her dress*) Why, thank you.
- 12 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Has crossed to them.*) Because the service
13 is about to begin, I don't have time to indulge in the
14 reasons why your presence should be prohibited and
15 your persons barred from the premises, but may I
16 forewarn the both of you that you shall vacate this
17 dwelling with little perturbation to either you or this
18 congregation as soon as the service has terminated.
- 19 MARGARET: (*To VIRGIL*) What did she say?
- 20 VIRGIL: I'm not sure, but I think she said "welcome."
- 21 MR. WILSON: (*Placing himself in front of the congregation*) Let's
22 all stand and turn in our hymnals to page four twenty-
23 six, "Victory in Jesus." (*As they begin to sing, VIRGIL and*
24 *MARGARET try to find the page. Toward the end of the first*
25 *verse, JASON, who is sitting one seat over from VIRGIL, leans*
26 *over and helps them find the right page. On the chorus,*
27 *VIRGIL and MARGARET, not knowing the song at all, sing*
28 *with all their might — loudly and off-key. The people begin to*
29 *murmur and some laugh. MRS. TISHWATER begins wiping*
30 *perspiration from her forehead with her handkerchief. TABOR*
31 *and HALGAN are laughing. When the first chorus is finished,*
32 *REVEREND DAVIS intervenes before any more can be sung.*)
- 33 REVEREND DAVIS: Thank you, Brother Wilson, for leading
34 us in that most precious Christian classic.
- 35 VIRGIL: (*Standing*) Yeah, that was real pretty! (*Everyone is*

1 *appalled and reacts. VIRGIL sits.)*

2 **MR. WILSON:** *(Trying to keep things moving)* **We will now ask**
 3 **Mrs. Tishwater to come at this time and present our**
 4 **special music.** *(MRS. TISHWATER smiles and takes her*
 5 *place. As she does, VIRGIL stands and addresses the*
 6 *congregation.)*

7 **VIRGIL:** You know, that song we just sung really has a good
 8 meanin' behind it, don't it? I'm a new Christian, and I've
 9 never really thought about the victory because of what
 10 Jesus has done for us. That really got me to thinkin'
 11 about how much God must love us to do what he did for
 12 us. Don't you think? *(Everyone is appalled. Some stare with*
 13 *contempt while others talk among themselves. MRS.*
 14 *TISHWATER stares at REVEREND DAVIS. VIRGIL sits,*
 15 *embarrassed.)*

16 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Go ahead, Mrs. Tishwater.

17 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Collects herself and faces out toward the*
 18 *audience. She takes her stance with her hands clasped at her*
 19 *waist and proceeds to sing "At the Cross" in a very operatic*
 20 *style.)* **Alas, and did my Savior bleed**

21 **And did my sovereign die.**

22 **Would he devote a sacred head**

23 **For a sinner such as I?**

24 *(VIRGIL and MARGARET applaud wildly. MRS.*
 25 *TISHWATER looks at them with great loathing. REVEREND*
 26 *DAVIS wipes a bit of perspiration off his brow. MRS.*
 27 *TISHWATER collects herself.)* **My daughter, Tisha, will**
 28 **now join me on the chorus.** *(TISHA flows to her mother and*
 29 *stands in the identical position, then they both sing.)*

30 **MRS. TISHWATER and TISHA:** At the cross, at the cross
 31 **Where I first saw the light**

32 **And the burdens of my heart rolled away.**

33 **It was there by faith I received my sight,**

34 **And now I am happy all the day.**

35 *(When they finish singing, VIRGIL and MARGARET pause to*

1 *make sure the end has come. When they're sure, they begin*
 2 *applauding. The congregation responds, and MRS.*
 3 *TISHWATER and TISHA take their seats. Everything is quiet*
 4 *as REVEREND DAVIS stands to address his congregation.*
 5 *VIRGIL stands and crosses to MRS. TISHWATER and speaks*
 6 *rather loudly.)*

7 **VIRGIL:** That was real good! *(He pats her on the shoulder and*
 8 *takes his seat.)*

9 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Looks over at REVEREND DAVIS.)*
 10 Reverend Davis, if you don't do something about ...

11 **REVEREND DAVIS:** *(Cutting her off)* If you all would give me
 12 your attention for just a moment. Easter Sunday is but
 13 one week away. As we think about the cross, I would
 14 like to speak to you this morning on the compassion of
 15 Christ. Jesus had a lot to say about how we are to treat
 16 our fellow man. He teaches us that we should love the
 17 exiled, that we should care for the rejected and
 18 disadvantaged ... *(His motions continue but his voice fades*
 19 *as other conversations are heard by the audience.)*

20 **TISHA:** *(Pointing to VIRGIL and MARGARET)* Mummy, why did
 21 they allow someone like those two in here?

22 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I'm not sure, Tisha my sweet, but I'm
 23 sure there must be something in the church covenant to
 24 prohibit such characters inside the sanctuary.

25 **REVEREND DAVIS:** *(His voice returning)* Jesus walked and
 26 lived among the average citizens of his day. He cared
 27 for their needs ...

28 **TISHA:** Maybe we should form a committee, Mummy, so this
 29 sort of thing never happens again.

30 **MRS. TISHWATER:** What a disgrace. They totally disrupted
 31 my song. I shall never face the congregation again.

32 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Jesus considered himself a servant.
 33 One who was there when the need arose. One who was
 34 always asking, "What can I do to help you?"

35 **MRS. TISHWATER:** What can we do to get rid of them?

- 1 **TABOR:** (*Coming to life again with HALGAN as the rest on stage*
2 *freeze*) **What a riot! This is too easy!**
- 3 **HALGAN:** You said it! With Mrs. Tishwater on our side, we'll
4 have Virgil discouraged in no time.
- 5 **TABOR:** (*Crossing to JASON*) That is, unless he gets in the
6 way.
- 7 **HALGAN:** Who's he?
- 8 **TABOR:** His name is Jason.
- 9 **HALGAN:** He's actually listening to the sermon.
- 10 **TABOR:** That's just what I mean. He's a fanatic. He lives
11 what he believes and all that. He's a real nuisance to
12 our cause.
- 13 **HALGAN:** He's an ugly one, all right. Do you think he'll give
14 us any trouble?
- 15 **TABOR:** Probably, but there's nothing we can do. He reads
16 his Bible every day.
- 17 **HALGAN:** (*Putting his hand up to his belly*) Don't tell me that on
18 an empty stomach.
- 19 **TABOR:** Shhh! Quiet. They're about to dismiss. (*As soon as*
20 *everyone unfreezes, they bow their heads. TABOR and*
21 *HALGAN run back to their spot.*)
- 22 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Dear Lord, may we have compassion
23 for those whom we consider misfits in our society.
24 Amen. (*He, VIRGIL, MARGARET, and JASON lift their*
25 *heads. All the others have fallen asleep. REVEREND DAVIS*
26 *speaks louder.*) **Amen!** (*The congregation stirs as they wake up,*
27 *startled.*) **Everyone be sure to greet the visitors on your**
28 **way out.** (*Everyone begins to exit immediately. VIRGIL and*
29 *MARGARET stand ready to be greeted, but to their surprise, it*
30 *doesn't happen. Everyone walks past them without any*
31 *acknowledgment.*)
- 32 **MARGARET:** Gee, Virgil, no one said anything to us.
- 33 **VIRGIL:** Well, Margaret, (*Wondering himself*) everybody's
34 probably hungry. It is lunch time, you know.
- 35 **MARGARET:** Of course. I knew there had to be a reasonable

- 1 **explanation.** (*As MRS. TISHWATER and TISHA cross to*
 2 *REVEREND DAVIS, they speak silently to him, pointing to*
 3 *VIRGIL and MARGARET. JASON crosses to VIRGIL and*
 4 *MARGARET and sticks out his hand.*)
- 5 **JASON:** Hello, my name is Jason.
- 6 **VIRGIL:** Hi. (*Shaking his hand*) I'm Virgil and this is my
 7 girlfriend, Margaret.
- 8 **JASON:** Nice to meet you.
- 9 **MARGARET:** Hi.
- 10 **JASON:** Are you from around here?
- 11 **VIRGIL:** (*Beat. Then looks around for a few seconds*) Where?
- 12 **JASON:** Around here. (*Pause*) Around town?
- 13 **VIRGIL:** Uh, yeah. I mean, I guess so. I was so young when I
 14 was born I don't remember.
- 15 **JASON:** (*Changing the subject*) Welcome to First Church. I
 16 hope you enjoyed the service.
- 17 **MARGARET:** I thought it was wonderful. I'm not used to
 18 hearing people talk about Jesus out loud.
- 19 **JASON:** You've never been to church before?
- 20 **VIRGIL:** This is the first time for both of us.
- 21 **JASON:** (*Glancing over at MRS. TISHWATER*) Listen, don't pay
 22 any attention to Mrs. Tishwater. Her bark is much
 23 worse than her bite.
- 24 **MARGARET:** You mean she bites people?
- 25 **JASON:** No, that was just a figure of speech.
- 26 **MARGARET:** Figure of ...
- 27 **VIRGIL:** (*With confidence*) Margaret, that means she only
 28 bites if you bark at her. (*JASON continues talking to*
 29 *VIRGIL and MARGARET as the attention shifts to Stage Left,*
 30 *where MRS. TISHWATER is speaking to REVEREND*
 31 *DAVIS.*)
- 32 **MRS. TISHWATER:** So, are you telling me you're not going
 33 to say anything?
- 34 **REVEREND DAVIS:** What do you mean?
- 35 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Aren't you going to nicely inform them

- 1 that they don't belong here?
- 2 **REVEREND DAVIS:** I can't do that.
- 3 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Reverend Davis, either you ask them to
- 4 leave, or I will do it for you. *(Starts to cross to VIRGIL and*
- 5 *MARGARET.)*
- 6 **REVEREND DAVIS:** *(Stopping her)* OK, I'll talk to them.
- 7 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Lifts her nose and throws him a smirk.)*
- 8 Come, Tisha dear, let us collect our things. *(They cross to*
- 9 *their seats, grabbing their coats and purses and powdering*
- 10 *their noses. REVEREND DAVIS crosses to Stage Right.)*
- 11 **REVEREND DAVIS:** *(Approaching VIRGIL, MARGARET, and*
- 12 *JASON)* Good morning, I'm Brother Davis. Nice to meet
- 13 you.
- 14 **VIRGIL:** *(Shaking hand)* Nice to meet you, Mr. Brother.
- 15 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Mr. Davis.
- 16 **MARGARET:** No, I'm Margaret.
- 17 **REVEREND DAVIS:** No, you don't understand.
- 18 **VIRGIL:** Yeah, she's been Margaret ever since I've known
- 19 her, Mr. Brother.
- 20 **REVEREND DAVIS:** *(Looking at JASON, perplexed)* Reverend
- 21 Davis.
- 22 **VIRGIL:** *(Pointing to JASON)* No, he's Jason.
- 23 **REVEREND DAVIS:** No ...
- 24 **VIRGIL:** *(Quickly to JASON)* You're not Jason?
- 25 **JASON:** Brother Davis ...
- 26 **VIRGIL:** Oh, I thought you said Jason ...
- 27 **JASON:** I did ...
- 28 **MARGARET:** You mean you lied?
- 29 **JASON:** No ...
- 30 **VIRGIL:** Margaret, he's just a little confused.
- 31 **JASON:** Wait a minute. My name is Jason ...
- 32 **MARGARET:** You're right, Virgil. He *is* confused.
- 33 **JASON:** *(Becoming confused himself)* I'm Jason and this is
- 34 Brother Virgil ... I mean ...
- 35 **VIRGIL:** *(Turning quickly to REVEREND DAVIS and shaking his*

- 1 *hand*) You have the same name as me!
- 2 **MARGARET:** What a coincidence!
- 3 **JASON:** (*Loudly*) Would everyone be quiet? (*He composes*
- 4 *himself.*) My name is Jason ... (*MARGARET and VIRGIL*
- 5 *start to speak.*) Don't say a word. This is Reverend Davis,
- 6 our pastor. Reverend Davis, this is Virgil and Margaret.
- 7 They're from around here, they think. They were so
- 8 young when they were born, they don't remember.
- 9 **REVEREND DAVIS:** So, you came this morning on purpose?
- 10 **MARGARET:** Actually, we came on a bus.
- 11 **REVEREND DAVIS:** (*Glancing over at MRS. TISHWATER and*
- 12 *TISHA*) No matter what anybody says to you, it was nice
- 13 having you two visit us this morning. We hope you'll
- 14 return on Easter Sunday next week. If you'll excuse me,
- 15 I must escape ... uh ... go find my wife. Please come
- 16 again sometime. (*He exits.*)
- 17 **VIRGIL:** (*Calling Off-Stage*) Thank you, Mr. Brother,
- 18 Reverend, sir. (*Turns to JASON*) Is he always that
- 19 confused?
- 20 **JASON:** Do you two have plans for lunch?
- 21 **VIRGIL:** We thought about going over to the diner and
- 22 splitting the Sunday special.
- 23 **MARGARET:** Mmmm, sweet and sour pork on a stick.
- 24 **JASON:** I know a better place. Why don't you join me for
- 25 lunch? My treat.
- 26 **VIRGIL:** You don't have to do that.
- 27 **JASON:** I insist. Why don't you two wait outside and I'll grab
- 28 my Bible and we'll be on our way.
- 29 **MARGARET:** Thanks, Jason. Come on, Virgil. (*VIRGIL and*
- 30 *MARGARET exit. TISHA has been sprucing herself up to*
- 31 *confront JASON.*)
- 32 **TISHA:** (*Floating to him, leaving her mother behind talking on her*
- 33 *cell phone*) Jason, Jason, Jason. You naughty boy, you.
- 34 **JASON:** Did I miss something?
- 35 **TISHA:** I saw you looking over at me during the sermon. You

1 little flirt.

2 **JASON:** You did?

3 **TISHA:** You just can't keep your eyes off me, can you?

4 **JASON:** I beg your pardon?

5 **TISHA:** You're going to have to learn to control yourself.

6 You know that, don't you? Like my perfume? *(Runs her*
7 *forearm under his nose.)* It's called "Midnight Jungle." It
8 releases the wild in men.

9 **JASON:** So that's what I smelled. I thought the toilet had
10 run over again.

11 **TISHA:** Playing hard-to-get as always. Well, Jason Brock,
12 two can play at that game.

13 **JASON:** *(Picking up his Bible)* Look, Tisha, I really need to be
14 going.

15 **TISHA:** And don't expect to come crawling back tomorrow,
16 because it's over, mister! Do you hear me? It's over!
17 *(JASON exits.)*

18 **TABOR:** *(Jumping off his stool)* That little sneak. he's already
19 started making them feel welcomed.

20 **HALGAN:** We're in real trouble now. What should we do?

21 **TABOR:** Follow them to the restaurant.

22 **HALGAN:** Good, I'm starved!

23 **TABOR:** Keep your mind on the task. Let's go! *(They exit,*
24 *running.)*

25 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Approaching her daughter and handing*
26 *TISHA her purse.)* Come along, Tisha. Let's find some
27 lunch.

28 **TISHA:** *(Overly dramatic)* Oh, mother! Must you be so
29 insensitive? Can't you see I'm upset? Can't you see my
30 heart's been broken? Shattered into millions of little
31 pieces? You expect me to think of food at the most
32 tragic point in my whole life?

33 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I'll let you have dessert.

34 **TISHA:** *(Lifts her head with a smile.)* Yummy. *(They exit. The*
35 *waiters serve the salads to the dinner guests.)*

SCENE 3

(During the serving of the salads, two small tables are brought out and the chairs that were used for the pews now sit around the tables. An indoor plant sits Center Stage between the tables. The lectern is removed and an optional sign may be brought out reading "Today's Special." The tables may be covered with red and white tablecloths with a single rose in a small vase sitting in the center of each one. This scene should begin shortly after all the guests have received their salads. At rise, MRS. TISHWATER and TISHA enter Stage Left, following a SERVER who is holding a couple of menus.)

SERVER: *(Crossing to the table Stage Right)* Will this table be OK?

MRS. TISHWATER: This will be fine.

SERVER: I will check back with you ladies. *(Exits.)*

TISHA: Anyway, Mummy, Jason just can't keep his eyes off me during the sermon. And he's always hanging around me after church. He clings to me like a starving leech.

MRS. TISHWATER: *(Looking at her menu)* Of course he does, dear. You're a very pretty, popular girl.

TISHA: Do you really think so, Mummy?

MRS. TISHWATER: My dear, you're as beautiful as ...

SERVER: *(Has entered and crossed to their table.)* Stuffed crab?

TISHA: What?

SERVER: Sunday's special, stuffed crab. Would you like to try it?

MRS. TISHWATER: Yes, bring us two, please.

SERVER: *(Taking their menus)* I will have those out shortly.

MRS. TISHWATER: In the meantime, we will go to the washroom and freshen up.

SERVER: *(Pointing Stage Right)* Yes ma'am, through the door and to your left. *(Exits.)*

MRS. TISHWATER: Come along, Tisha dear.

TISHA: *(Following her mother out)* Anyway, Mummy, I

1 explained to Jason that he must keep his mind on the
2 sermon and not on me ... *(They exit. five seconds pass and*
3 *VIRGIL, MARGARET, and JASON enter, led by the same*
4 *SERVER holding three menus. They cross to the table Stage*
5 *Left.)*

6 **SERVER:** And how is this table?

7 **JASON:** This will be fine, thank you.

8 **SERVER:** I'll give you a moment to look over the menu. *(She*
9 *exits.)*

10 **VIRGIL:** *(Looking around)* This sure is a fancy place.

11 **MARGARET:** *(Holding her menu upside-down)* I didn't know
12 this was one of those foreign restaurants.

13 **JASON:** What do you mean?

14 **MARGARET:** I can't read the writin'. *(JASON reaches over and*
15 *turns the menu right side up.)* There, that's better.

16 **SERVER:** *(Enters with order pad.)* Are you ready to order?

17 **JASON:** Virgil, what are you having?

18 **VIRGIL:** Gosh, I don't know. It all looks good.

19 **MARGARET:** Jason, why don't you order for us?

20 **JASON:** Their steaks are great. How does that sound?

21 **VIRGIL:** Expensive.

22 **JASON:** No problem, it's on me. *(To SERVER)* Steak it is.

23 **SERVER:** Very good. *(To VIRGIL)* And how do you like your
24 steak, sir?

25 **VIRGIL:** *(Pauses as he looks down at the table.)* I don't know, you
26 haven't brought it to me yet.

27 **JASON:** No, Virgil. She means how do you want it cooked?

28 **VIRGIL:** Oh. *(To MARGARET)* Margaret, how do you want
29 yours cooked?

30 **MARGARET:** On a stove.

31 **VIRGIL:** *(Closing his menu)* Me too.

32 **JASON:** You don't understand. Do you want it medium?

33 **VIRGIL:** I'm pretty hungry, better make it a large.

34 **JASON:** *(To SERVER)* Just make them all medium well.

35 **SERVER:** Got it. *(Takes the menus.)* I'll have those out shortly.

- 1 *(Exits.)*
2 JASON: So, what brought you guys to First Church this
3 morning?
4 MARGARET: Greyhound.
5 JASON: I mean, why did you come to our church?
6 VIRGIL: We are both new at this Christian thing. We just
7 wanted to learn more about Jesus. So we jumped on the
8 bus and the first church we came to, we just got right
9 off and marched on in.
10 JASON: What did you think of the service?
11 MARGARET: It was just beautiful.
12 VIRGIL: Especially when Mrs. Dishwater got up ...
13 JASON: *(Interrupting)* Virgil, her name is Tishwater.
14 VIRGIL: Right. Anyway, when she sang her song, it was like
15 Jesus was standin' right in front of me.
16 JASON: *(Surprised)* Really?
17 MARGARET: Oh, yes. It put goose pimples all over my whole
18 body.
19 JASON: Yes, Mrs. Tishwater gives everyone goose pimples,
20 but I'm afraid it's for a different reason.
21 SERVER: *(Enters and crosses to their table.)* I just checked the
22 kitchen, and those steaks should be right out.
23 VIRGIL: *(To SERVER)* Speakin' of steaks, I got a joke for you.
24 Where does the cow go out on Saturday nights?
25 SERVER: I don't know, where?
26 VIRGIL: To the mooovies. *(VIRGIL and MARGARET laugh*
27 *while SERVER and JASON look puzzled. TABOR and*
28 *HALGAN rush in Stage Right.)*
29 HALGAN: Do you see anything?
30 TABOR: *(Pointing to them)* Right there. I wonder if we've
31 missed anything.
32 HALGAN: *(Sniffs.)* I smell that jalapeno sauce simmering in
33 the kitchen. Can't we just swipe one little morsel?
34 TABOR: No. Our mission is souls, not your stomach.
35 HALGAN: I could really go for a piping hot coffee break.

- 1 **TABOR:** (*Holding up his fist*) I'll give you a break if you don't
 2 stop your griping.
- 3 **HALGAN:** Shhh, there comes Mrs. Tishwater. (*They take a seat*
 4 *on their stools as the SERVER unfreezes and exits. MRS.*
 5 *TISHWATER and TISHA enter and cross to their table, not*
 6 *noticing their neighbor table behind the plant.*)
- 7 **TISHA:** (*Entering, talking quickly*) Anyway, all the boys at
 8 school are always wanting to carry my books. Of course
 9 I let them, what with books weighing so much and all. I
 10 had one of the boys offer to carry me to class one day. I
 11 mean, can you imagine that? Carry *me* to class. (*Laughs.*)
 12 Can't you just see that, Mummy? Can't you just see it?
- 13 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Tisha, you're getting on Mummy's nerves.
- 14 **TISHA:** I think it's just appalling the way boys are today. No
 15 self-control. Take that Jason Brock, for instance.
 16 Watching me all during church. He has some nerve.
- 17 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Speaking of Jason, it would be just like
 18 him to try and befriend those two little twirps. I must
 19 call Reverend Davis first thing in the morning and
 20 schedule a meeting on this matter.
- 21 **TISHA:** (*Spying the other table through the tree*) Speaking of
 22 those little twirps, I think they're with Jason now.
- 23 **MRS. TISHWATER:** (*Turning and looking*) What? It can't be!
- 24 **TISHA:** (*Standing and stomping her foot*) Oh, Mummy, *no!*
- 25 **VIRGIL:** (*Hears this and turns and sees them. He immediately*
 26 *jumps up and runs over to their table.*) Margaret, look! It's
 27 Mrs. Dishwater and Tisha from the church.
- 28 **MARGARET:** (*Also runs over to them.*) Well, fancy meeting you
 29 here.
- 30 **TISHA:** (*Sitting and covering her face with her napkin*) Oh, Mummy!
- 31 **VIRGIL:** (*To MRS. TISHWATER*) That song you sung at
 32 church was just beautiful.
- 33 **JASON:** (*Approaching their table*) Mrs. Tishwater. Tisha.
- 34 **TISHA:** Jason, how could you be seen ...
- 35 **JASON:** Tisha, not now.

- 1 VIRGIL: We're having lunch with Jason. He's buying us
2 steaks.
- 3 MRS. TISHWATER: Mr. Brock, will you please?
- 4 JASON: Virgil, Margaret, maybe we should go back to our
5 table. I don't think Mrs. Tishwater is feeling very well.
- 6 MARGARET: (*Bending over her*) Are you sick, Mrs. Dishwater?
7 Do you feel like you're going to throw up?
- 8 VIRGIL: Do you have that sinkin' feelin' in the pit of your
9 stomach and you feel that it's turnin' and churnin' and
10 you might just upchuck all over the place? Is that the
11 way you feel, Mrs. Dishwater?
- 12 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Standing*) Yes! That's how I feel right
13 now!
- 14 JASON: Virgil, I don't think Mrs. Tishwater wants to hear ...
- 15 MRS. TISHWATER: That's right, Virgil. I don't want to hear
16 anything from you ever again. I want you and this —
17 this gremlin to get away from me. I want you to get
18 away and stay away!
- 19 TISHA: And that goes for me too! (*VIRGIL and MARGARET*
20 *are quiet. They're embarrassed and deeply hurt.*)
- 21 VIRGIL: (*Softly*) I'm sorry, Mrs. Dishwater. I'm sorry, Tisha.
22 We just thought ...
- 23 MRS. TISHWATER: Just go!
- 24 JASON: (*Leading them back to their table*) Come on, Virgil. Let's
25 go sit back down.
- 26 HALGAN: Boy, that was a good one.
- 27 TABOR: Yeah! What a kick in the old spiritual gut.
- 28 JASON: (*As they take their seats*) Look, I told you not to pay her
29 any mind. Please don't let this get to you. We'll eat our
30 lunch, then go for a walk in the park and forget the
31 whole thing ever happened.
- 32 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Fanning herself*) Tisha, my sweet. Hand
33 Mummy her purse. I need my blood pressure pills.
- 34 TISHA: (*Looking around*) Where is your purse, Mummy?
- 35 MRS. TISHWATER: It's got to be around here somewhere.

1 TISHA: But I'm looking everywhere. It's not here.
 2 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Standing and pointing to VIRGIL*) You!
 3 JASON: We beg your pardon?
 4 MRS. TISHWATER: (*To VIRGIL*) You stole my purse!
 5 JASON: What?
 6 VIRGIL: Me?
 7 MRS. TISHWATER: Police! Police! Help! Theft!
 8 JASON: Mrs. Tishwater, you don't know what you're saying!
 9 MRS. TISHWATER: (*To VIRGIL and MARGARET*) I knew you
 10 were no good when I first laid eyes on you. You stole my
 11 purse, and if I don't get it back, you're in big trouble.
 12 TISHA: Oh, Mummy, you mean jail? How exciting!
 13 SERVER: (*Running in*) What's the matter? Is everyone all
 14 right?
 15 MRS. TISHWATER: I will be just as soon as this pickpocket
 16 is put behind bars!
 17 JASON: Mrs. Tishwater, please! Virgil didn't ...
 18 MRS. TISHWATER: Police! Police! (*The meal continues as the*
 19 *waiters clear the salad plates, then serve the main course. When*
 20 *all the guests have their entrées, begin Scene 4.*)

SCENE 4

25 (*In the darkness, the VOICE is heard.*)
 26 VOICE: Tabor! Halgan! (*Lights up on HALGAN and TABOR as*
 27 *they stand in their original position.*)
 28 TABOR: We're here, sir!
 29 VOICE: You two have done it again!
 30 HALGAN: Thank you, sir.
 31 VOICE: (*Angry*) I mean you have failed me once more.
 32 TABOR: Failed you, sir?
 33 HALGAN: But how? Mrs. Tishwater is going to report Virgil
 34 to the police. We're all set!
 35 VOICE: That was all a mistake. Mrs. Tishwater remembered

1 that she had left her purse in the car. If you would have
2 stayed at your post, you would have known that.
3 HALGAN: Yes, sir.
4 TABOR: May I say, sir, that Mrs. Tishwater does hate Virgil,
5 and she's being dreadfully nasty to him.
6 VOICE: That's not enough.
7 TABOR: What do you mean, sir?
8 VOICE: Tishwater is feeling somewhat guilty about the
9 incident at the café. We must reinforce her anger
10 toward Virgil and Margaret.
11 TABOR: Just tell us what to do, sir. I promise we won't let
12 you down this time.
13 VOICE: Listen closely. Here's the plan. (*TABOR and HALGAN*
14 *exit.*)

SCENE 5

19 *(An easy chair sits Stage Right with a floor lamp on one side*
20 *and a small table with a glass of water and aspirin on it. MRS.*
21 *TISHWATER enters wearing a bathrobe and stands in front of*
22 *the chair. At the same time, VIRGIL enters, also wearing a*
23 *bathrobe, and stands on the opposite side of the stage. They*
24 *both take praying positions standing up.)*
25 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Dear God ... *(Sigh)* Thank you for all thy
26 many blessings. Thank you for my sweet Tisha and for
27 my church. Oh, and God, about this Virgil person. I
28 guess I should not have reacted so ... so viciously today.
29 That really is beneath me. I guess what I really want to
30 say is ... well, you know what I'm trying to say. I don't
31 have to spell it out, do I? I just think it might be better
32 for all involved if he and his ... his girlfriend find
33 another place to worship. You know, where they can
34 better fit in. A church for their kind of people.
35 **VIRGIL:** Dear Jesus, please forgive me of my sins. I surely

1 don't deserve everything you have done for me. I want
 2 to thank you for lettin' me go to church today. Jason
 3 and Brother Reverend were real nice ...

4 MRS. TISHWATER: God, hasn't everything just been going
 5 so smoothly lately? First of all, I've had the opportunity
 6 to sing more solos, and I know that's a blessing to you.
 7 Oh, and all the sermons are getting shorter, giving us a
 8 chance to make it to the good restaurants before the
 9 crowds. Hallelujah! Yes, everything has really been
 10 going wonderfully, and then ... well, today ... God, it's
 11 just that people like that don't know how to act in
 12 public. I guess it's not their fault ... really ...

13 VIRGIL: And Jesus, thank you for Mrs. Dishwater and
 14 Tisha. I don't think they like us too much. If I have done
 15 anything to hurt their feelin's, then I'm just as sorry as
 16 I can be. I'm sure they're nice people ... really ...

17 MRS. TISHWATER: So, God, I'm sure you agree they would
 18 feel much more comfortable with people of their own
 19 kind, and we ... well, we can have a normal Easter this
 20 Sunday and everyone will be the better for it, don't you
 21 think?

22 VIRGIL: And Lord, I know I'm not too smart or talented,
 23 but ... well, if there is anything I can do for you, then I
 24 sure would be glad to do it. Yeah, Lord, I sure would
 25 like to do it.

26 MRS. TISHWATER: And thank you for all my many talents!
 27 Especially my voice. There are so many who comment
 28 on its professional quality and perfect pitch. And I'm
 29 using it in the church! Aren't you the lucky one?

30 VIRGIL: Well, thanks for listenin', Jesus. I'll ... I'll talk to
 31 you tomorrow.

32 MRS. TISHWATER: In thy holy name I pray, amen. (*VIRGIL*
 33 *exits as MRS. TISHWATER sits, picks up a book off the small*
 34 *table, and begins reading it. TABOR and HALGAN enter*
 35 *tiptoeing across to MRS. TISHWATER and stand behind her*

1 *chair. TABOR waves his hands over MRS. TISHWATER's*
 2 *head. As he casts his spell, MRS. TISHWATER drifts off to*
 3 *sleep.)*

4 **TABOR:** Deeper, deeper you will sleep, dreaming of that
 5 Virgil creep. In disgust you'll rise from bed, churning
 6 nerd thoughts in your head. Easter Sunday will be
 7 gruesome if you grant this clumsy twosome access to
 8 your hallowed ground, influencing all little children
 9 around. It's up to you, something must be done. If you
 10 don't act now, then they have won. Dream, Mrs.
 11 Tishwater, Dreeeaaam. *(Optional dream music plays as*
 12 *MRS. TISHWATER slips into a deep sleep. If possible, the*
 13 *lights change to blue. A moment later, TISHA enters in her*
 14 *bathrobe as TABOR and HALGAN stand back and watch the*
 15 *action.)*

16 **TISHA:** *(Gently shaking her mother)* Mummy. Mummy, are you
 17 awake? Mummy?

18 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Rubbing her eyes)* Tisha, dear? What is it?
 19 What's the matter?

20 **TISHA:** Mummy, the most wonderful person is interested in
 21 me.

22 **MRS. TISHWATER:** What — did Jason call you?

23 **TISHA:** Oh, no Mother, it's much better than that.

24 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Better than Jason? But I thought if you
 25 couldn't have him, you didn't want anyone.

26 **TISHA:** *(Sitting on the arm of the chair)* But Mummy, that was
 27 before I met ...

28 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Met who?

29 **TISHA:** It's just too good to be true, that's all.

30 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Tisha, you're trying Mummy's patience.

31 **TISHA:** Mummy, I'm in love!

32 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Settling back into her chair)* Oh, is that all?
 33 Good night, dear.

34 **TISHA:** No, Mummy! It's the real thing this time. We want to
 35 get married right away!

- 1 MRS. TISHWATER: What?
- 2 TISHA: He's waiting in the hallway. We want to receive your
3 blessing together. Oh, Mummy, isn't this exciting?
- 4 MRS. TISHWATER: Tisha, you mean you have brought this
5 boy home tonight?
- 6 TISHA: Let me get him. (*TISHA exits. MRS. TISHWATER places*
7 *her book on the small table and stands looking in the direction*
8 *TISHA exited.*)
- 9 MRS. TISHWATER: Tisha, this has got to be the craziest
10 thing you have done to your poor mother.
- 11 TISHA: (*Reentering wearing a white veil*) Mummy, I want you to
12 meet ... (*She turns, but he's not there. She speaks to someone*
13 *Off-stage.*) Come on. Don't be afraid. (*VIRGIL enters. MRS.*
14 *TISHWATER gasps.*) Mummy, I want you to meet my
15 fiancé.
- 16 VIRGIL: (*Runs to the opposite side of MRS. TISHWATER, who has*
17 *dropped into her chair.*) Hello, (*Then gets closer*) Mummy.
- 18 MRS. TISHWATER: Tisha, what is going on here? This joke
19 is not funny at all.
- 20 TISHA: But it's not a joke at all, Mummy. I love Virgil. You
21 will understand for my sake, won't you?
- 22 MRS. TISHWATER: You? Love him? (*She grabs the aspirin*
23 *bottle and downs some aspirin.*)
- 24 TISHA: Since Virgil doesn't have a job yet, is it all right if we
25 live with you for a while?
- 26 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Rises and grabs TISHA's arm and pulls her*
27 *away from VIRGIL. VIRGIL retrieves a bouquet of flowers from*
28 *behind the chair and hands them to TISHA.*) Tisha, wake up.
29 You must come to your senses. This is the same Virgil
30 who was at church this Sunday. The one who disrupted
31 the service. The one who embarrassed us in the
32 restaurant.
- 33 TISHA: We're getting married, Mummy! And we're getting
34 married with or without your blessing. (*Yells to Off-*
35 *stage.*) Come on in, Reverend!

1 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Reverend? (*REVEREND DAVIS, MR.*
 2 *WILSON, and JASON enter Stage Right. They cross to Stage*
 3 *Left and stand facing Center Stage, all as though they are in a*
 4 *trance.*)

5 **MRS. TISHWATER:** You mean you plan to be married now?
 6 Here? Tonight?

7 **TISHA:** That's right. We want to get married before Easter
 8 Sunday so we can both worship together for the first
 9 time on the most important day of the year!

10 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Tisha, what has happened to you? I
 11 want this nonsense stopped right now!

12 **TISHA:** Oh, I almost forgot. Virgil's parents are here. (*Yells*
 13 *Off-stage.*) Come on in, guys! (*His MOTHER and FATHER*
 14 *enter. They are dressed just like VIRGIL.*) Mummy, this is
 15 Virgil's mother and father.

16 **VIRGIL'S PARENTS:** (*In unison*) Hello, Mrs. Dishwater. (*As*
 17 *TISHA positions everyone for the wedding, MRS.*
 18 *TISHWATER crosses to REVEREND DAVIS.*)

19 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Dear Reverend Davis, you must stop
 20 this charade! Can't you see my Tisha has lost her mind?
 21 (*He doesn't acknowledge her. She crosses to MR. WILSON.*)
 22 Mr. Wilson, surely you realize the mistake she's making.
 23 Can't you talk to her? Can't anyone talk to her?

24 **VIRGIL'S MOTHER:** (*Steps out from the wedding party.*) Mrs.
 25 Dishwater, it's going to be so much fun being in the
 26 same family. We can exchange recipes, go shopping
 27 together, and have a little girl talk over coffee — don't
 28 you think? This here is my husband Willard ...

29 **VIRGIL'S FATHER:** (*Stepping out with his wife*) I like to drive
 30 tractors.

31 **VIRGIL'S MOTHER:** He's out of work right now, and we
 32 were wondering if we could stay with you for a while.
 33 Just until he gets back on his feet, of course.

34 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Of course you can't live with me! This
 35 wedding is not going to take place! (*Runs over to TISHA,*

1 *who is standing arm in arm with VIRGIL, facing REVEREND*
2 DAVIS.) Do you hear me, Tisha? This wedding is called
3 off. I won't allow it!

4 **REVEREND DAVIS:** *(Like a robot)* Do you, Tisha, take Virgil
5 to be your lawfully wedded husband?

6 **TISHA:** Oh, I do, I do, I do ...

7 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Tisha, are you listening to me?

8 **REVEREND DAVIS:** And do you, Virgil, take Tisha to be
9 your lawfully wedded wife?

10 **VIRGIL:** Does a cow chew cud?

11 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Is there anyone here who thinks this
12 wedding should not take place? Speak now or forever
13 hold your peace.

14 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I object! I object!

15 **TISHA:** Oh, Mummy, do be quiet!

16 **VIRGIL:** Yeah, Mummy. Your vote doesn't count!

17 **REVEREND DAVIS:** I now pronounce you man and wife.
18 Virgil, you may kiss the bride. *(VIRGIL and TISHA lean in*
19 *to kiss one another, but MRS. TISHWATER sticks her arm*
20 *between them, causing them to smooch her arm.)*

21 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I won't allow this, I tell you. *(MR. WILSON*
22 *begins humming a waltz or music is played in the background as*
23 *VIRGIL'S PARENTS throw confetti on VIRGIL and TISHA,*
24 *who are now dancing together. VIRGIL'S MOTHER is crying.*
25 *JASON and REVEREND DAVIS are also dancing.)*

26 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Following VIRGIL and TISHA around the*
27 *stage.)* Tisha, you're not listening to me. This can't
28 happen! Reverend Davis, how can you allow this? This-
29 cannot-take-place! This is your mother speaking! Do
30 you hear me? I am your mother! *(TISHA and VIRGIL grab*
31 *a suitcase and wave good-bye as they exit. Everyone waves, then*
32 *they stop and look back at MRS. TISHWATER and begin*
33 *laughing. They exit slowly as they laugh louder and louder.*
34 *MRS. TISHWATER covers her ears and crosses back to her*
35 *chair and sits. TABOR and HALGAN, who have been watching*

- 1 *all this with much amusement, stand behind her chair as the*
 2 *lights return to normal.) No, this is your mother speaking.*
 3 Tisha, you can't do this to me ...
 4 TABOR: Do you think it worked?
 5 HALGAN: How should I know?
 6 TABOR: Let's wake her up. *(He shakes her shoulder.)*
 7 MRS. TISHWATER: *(Raises her head.)* No!
 8 TISHA: *(Runs in wearing her bathrobe.)* Mummy? Mummy,
 9 what's the matter?
 10 MRS. TISHWATER: *(Stands quickly.)* Tisha? Tisha, is that
 11 really my Tisha?
 12 TISHA: Yes, Mummy, it's me.
 13 MRS. TISHWATER: It was a dream! No, not a dream, a
 14 nightmare! Tisha, my sweet, it was only a nightmare.
 15 TISHA: You scared me so with all that screaming.
 16 MRS. TISHWATER: That dreadful Virgil is haunting me in
 17 my sleep. I'll not have my Easter Sunday ruined! I'll not
 18 have my family influenced! I must act quickly. I'll
 19 arrange a meeting tomorrow with Reverend Davis and
 20 settle this little matter once and for all.
 21 TABOR: *(Crossing and standing in front of MRS. TISHWATER)* It
 22 worked! The plan worked!
 23 HALGAN: His majesty was right. He knew just what it would
 24 take. Now I have just one more question!
 25 TABOR: What?
 26 HALGAN: Can we go get something to eat? I'm starved.
 27 *(TABOR grabs HALGAN's ear and drags him Off-stage.)*

28
 29

SCENE 6

30
 31

- 32 *(The setting is a park. A park bench sits Center Stage, and two*
 33 *trees have been placed on either side of the bench. VIRGIL and*
 34 *MARGARET enter. MARGARET is holding a shoe box.)*
 35 MARGARET: What a beautiful spring day it is, Virgil.

- 1 VIRGIL: Margaret, the sun might be shinin', the birds might
2 be singin', and the flowers might be buddin', but there's
3 nothing out here that is as pretty as you. *(He drops his*
4 *head as though he just embarrassed himself.)*
- 5 MARGARET: *(Referring to her box)* My pet parakeet enjoys
6 these little walks in the park. *(She lifts the lid a little and*
7 *peeks inside.)* Say "hey" to Virgil, Cracker.
- 8 VIRGIL: *(Sticks his finger inside the box as though he tries to pet it.)*
9 Hey, little Cracker. Hey there, little birdie. *(He yanks his*
10 *hand back.)* Ouch!
- 11 MARGARET: What happened?
- 12 VIRGIL: Cracker bit me.
- 13 MARGARET: I can't understand that. That's not like my
14 Cracker at all.
- 15 VIRGIL: *(Lowering his head)* Even the little birdies in the world
16 don't like me.
- 17 MARGARET: Virgil ... *(Pause)* ... I like you.
- 18 VIRGIL: Do you really?
- 19 MARGARET: More than anything in the world. *(Pause)* Yes,
20 Virgil. I love you.
- 21 VIRGIL: *(As he realizes what he just heard, he looks out to the*
22 *audience and jumps up.)* Did you hear that, world? She
23 loves me. Margaret loves me. Little butterflies, tiny
24 worms down in the ground, great big oak trees, how
25 lucky you are to witness such a moment as this! Margaret
26 loves me! And I love her! *(With those words, VIRGIL sits on*
27 *the bench, landing right on top of Cracker's box and smashing*
28 *it.)*
- 29 MARGARET: Virgil! *(Realizing what he has done, VIRGIL stands*
30 *and picks up the flat box.)* You just smashed Cracker!
- 31 VIRGIL: I'm ... I'm sorry, Margaret.
- 32 MARGARET: I've had him for five whole years!
- 33 VIRGIL: I don't know what to say.
- 34 MARGARET: *(Pause, then turns to him.)* Don't worry about it,
35 Virgil. The most important thing is that you love me.

1 *(Turns toward the audience and clasps her hands.)* **Virgil**
 2 **loves me!**

3 **VIRGIL:** *(Peeking back into the box)* **Cracker?** *(The dishes from*
 4 *the main course may be cleared at this time.)*

5

6

7

SCENE 7

8

9 *(Lights come up on MRS. TISHWATER's living room. MRS.*
 10 *TISHWATER stands while JASON and MR. WILSON sit on*
 11 *the sofa. REVEREND DAVIS rushes in.)*

12 **REVEREND DAVIS:** All right, I'm here! What seems to be the
 13 matter? Who called this emergency meeting?

14 **MRS. TISHWATER:** I did, Reverend Davis.

15 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Is there a problem?

16 **JASON:** I have a feeling I know what this meeting is about.

17 **MRS. TISHWATER:** Good, then I won't have to waste a lot of
 18 precious time explaining the situation.

19 **REVEREND DAVIS:** Mrs. Tishwater, please tell me this
 20 doesn't have anything to do with those two people who
 21 were here Sunday morning.

22 **MRS. TISHWATER:** It does, and I mean to have this matter
 23 taken care of immediately.

24 **MR. WILSON:** Mrs. Tishwater ...

25 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Interrupting)* And I don't need
 26 interruptions while I'm speaking! Now, what I'm here to
 27 say is that different churches cater to different levels of
 28 society —

29 **JASON:** But we can't —

30 **MRS. TISHWATER:** *(Turns on her heel.)* I'm not finished yet,
 31 thank you very much! We can't fight the social system,
 32 the natural order of things. I'm simply saying ...

33 **JASON:** *(Stands in anger.)* You're simply saying that you want
 34 us to kick Virgil and Margaret out of this church! A
 35 place that should invite all who choose to come to

- 1 celebrate the resurrection this Easter Sunday!
- 2 REVEREND DAVIS: Jason, please. Mrs. Tishwater, am I
- 3 wrong in thinking that Christ came to die for every
- 4 person? Did he die for only a select number who dress
- 5 the right way or use the right words in their speech?
- 6 MR. WILSON: Virgil and Margaret are new Christians
- 7 looking for a place to worship — a place where they're
- 8 accepted and fit in ...
- 9 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Shouts back.*) But that's just it! They
- 10 don't fit in! Not here! But that's not to say they won't fit
- 11 in somewhere else.
- 12 TISHA: (*Running in*) Mummy, there you are. I need to speak
- 13 to you. It's urgent!
- 14 MRS. TISHWATER: Tisha, dear! We're in a meeting ...
- 15 TISHA: (*Pulling her mother Downstage Center*) But Mummy, I
- 16 have a plan, and I think you'll want to hear it before you
- 17 go any further.
- 18 MRS. TISHWATER: Well, let me hear it. I'm getting nowhere
- 19 here.
- 20 TISHA: Well, you know how crazy Virgil and Margaret are
- 21 about one another?
- 22 MRS. TISHWATER: So?
- 23 TISHA: Well, let's just say they don't have each other any
- 24 longer.
- 25 MRS. TISHWATER: What do you mean?
- 26 TISHA: If Margaret were to leave Virgil, he would be all
- 27 alone.
- 28 MRS. TISHWATER: Tisha, I don't have time for riddles! Get
- 29 to the point.
- 30 TISHA: I'll pretend I'm interested in Virgil. Then I'll make it
- 31 look as if he's interested in me, and I'll arrange to have
- 32 Margaret find us together.
- 33 MRS. TISHWATER: (*Rubbing her hands together*) Yes?
- 34 TISHA: Margaret will leave Virgil, Virgil will leave the
- 35 church, and our problem is solved. (*TISHA turns to see the*



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