

Beautiful Day of Wrest

A Comedy in Three Scenes

By Charlee Cardon Wilson

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Poor old Job had to endure a lot. But did he ever have to get his family dressed and delivered to Sunday morning meetings on time? Your audiences will really identify with this comedy. It is a fast-paced, funny portrayal of Sunday crises in a Mormon home. The Sabbath in the Bingham household is neither restful nor spiritually uplifting. Sister Bingham regards the day as a frustrating time of lost shoes, forgotten talks and mismatched socks. After a particularly catastrophic Sunday morning she devises a plan to eliminate the confusion and get her family to Church on time for a change. Does her plan work? Well - sort of. Highly entertaining. Designed for amateur actors on a shoestring budget. Ages of the characters may be adapted to fit the talent available in individual wards.

About 1 hour

See additional Director's Notes at end of script.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 1 w, 5 children.)

ED BINGHAM: Typical Mormon father. A punctual man in a chronically late family. He's been raised by Aunt Ethel, the perfect Zion Woman and doesn't understand why everyone doesn't adopt her methods.

LOUISE BINGHAM: Typical Mormon mother. She is the "star" of this play. She handles many Sunday emergencies, but still hasn't gotten the hang of doing it calmly and efficiently.

HEATHER BINGHAM: Eldest, most responsible of the Bingham offspring. She has the lion's share of chores but doesn't always appreciate it. 16-17

JENNIFER BINGHAM: Second oldest daughter, she's always lost something, or winds up pinned together or discovering a spill on her dress last minute. 14-16

MARK BINGHAM: Eldest son. Age 15-17, could be 14 if adjustments in script are made. Best if played by a tall young man, teenaged sons frequently tower over their mothers and sometimes their fathers. Whatever size, or age, he is still on the little boy side as far as maturity goes. He finds enjoyment in teasing his younger brother, but sometimes finds the younger boy to be a pain too.

AMY BINGHAM: Youngest daughter, she can be quite young, but no older than 11. *(Some lines may have to be grown up a bit for an eleven-year-old.)* Recommend age to be 6-8 depending on the age of Alan, if he's older Primary age, use a younger Amy.

ALAN BINGHAM: Youngest son. May be as old as 10, but would recommend he be the youngest family member. Age 5 is great, and if he's small and Mark is tall, they're both scene stealers. He's all boy, and can't seem to avoid accidents.

JOHN JENSEN: The unwitting Sunday School teacher who drops by to pick up a tape for his lesson only to catch Sister Bingham in her slip. He's not really at ease in other peoples' homes to begin with - the new home teacher or green missionary personality.

STAGE SET

There is a couch center stage, with easy chairs on either side of it. (*Use foyer furniture if available.*) A phone table with a lamp and phone is upstage right. There are two pencils and a pad on the table. Pictures and curtains may be hung on the stage curtains to reinforce the feeling of walls. A window is to the left of the center back exit (*outside exit*). Underneath it is a bookshelf or planter. On the other side of the door is another bookshelf. The door center back may be a door frame with door that opens, or, more simply, an opening in the curtains to suggest an exit. In the latter case, when a character exits, the outside door is to the right, offstage, out of the audience's view. Brother Jensen is greeted behind the curtain at the door. The kitchen exit (*Kit.*) is upstage right, the (*BR.*) bedroom exit is upstage left. The Music Room (*MR.*) exit is downstage left. There are throw pillows on couch and chairs, a newspaper on the couch in scene 1. During the first scene, the stage becomes a shambles of socks, newspapers, and throw pillows.

Scene 2 opens in the same mess with additions of a notebook, calendar, colored pens or pencils, and a box or basket which has a laundry bag draped over one side. Scene 3 shows us a neat, shiny set. The addition of fresh flowers or slightly fuller plants on the plant stand lend the feeling of spic and span. If desired a hanging plant may be suspended in the corner in front of the curtain that represents the BR exit. Scene changes take from 3 to 7 minutes depending on how fast the cast can change and how near dressing rooms are. If there are storage rooms on stage, they make excellent quick-change rooms for Mark, and Jennifer, and Sister Bingham. You'll need a crew member to help with changes and protect the privacy of anyone changing. Boys may wish to wear under shirts and gym shorts under their clothing so they may change backstage without embarrassment. Musical numbers arranged for the intervals between scenes will hold the audience rather than letting them visit. They'll be more responsive.

Scene 1

(SUNDAY MORNING: As curtain opens, the hymn "The Day Dawn Is Breaking" is heard being played poorly offstage. Someone is obviously practicing it. MARK, wearing a bath robe or grubbies, barefooted, is reading paper on couch center stage. JENNIFER enters from BR wearing bathrobe or grubbies with a towel wrapped turban-style around her head. She's looking for something.)

JENNIFER: Mark, have you seen my gold belt anywhere?

MARK: Nope

JENNIFER: Well, I have to have it. Are you sure you haven't seen it?

MARK: *(Engrossed in reading.)* Yup!

JENNIFER: *(Crosses to SR music room exit.)* Heather, have you seen my gold belt?

HEATHER: *(Offstage.)* No

JENNIFER: *(Looks around some more.)* Stand up, Mark, maybe you're sitting on it. *(HE stands with paper still in hand.)* Ooh, I'll just die if I can't find that belt! *(She goes back to MR and shouts.)* Heather, are you sure you haven't seen my belt?

HEATHER: *(MUSIC is messed up, a chord is crashed.)* For Pete's sake I haven't seen your stupid belt! Will you leave me alone? I almost had it that time!

JENNIFER: Ooh! *(Exits to Kit. Phone RINGS.)*

SISTER BINGHAM: *(Offstage.)* Can somebody get that, please?

(MARK sits. SIS BINGHAM reads as phone continues to ring.)

HEATHER: *(Offstage.)* Someone answer that, I'm practicing!

SISTER BINGHAM: *(Offstage.)* Isn't anyone in there?

(Phone keeps ringing as SIS BINGHAM enters from BR carrying skirt she's hemming, sees Mark, gives him threatening look.)

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SISTER BINGHAM: *(Cont'd)* Mark!

MARK: *(Looking up.)* Huh?

SISTER BINGHAM: The phone! *(She goes to it.)*

MARK: Oh ... oh, yeah ... *(Defensively.)* Well, it isn't for me.

SISTER BINGHAM: *(Exasperated, answers phone.)* Hello ...
(Sighs.) Yes, just a minute ... *(Holds phone out to Mark menacingly.)* It's for you, of course.

MARK: Well, uh, it isn't usually.

(MARK takes phone, turns his back to audience, pantomimes conversation.)

SISTER BINGHAM: *(Goes to MR exit.)* Heather.

HEATHER: *(Offstage.)* What?

SISTER BINGHAM: Come in here, please.

(Enter HEATHER from MR. JENNIFER enters from Kit. Still looking for her belt.)

SISTER BINGHAM: *(Cont'd.)* I need you to get some Jell-o set now.

HEATHER: Okay, I'll never get that darn hymn learned anyhow. *(To Jennifer.)* Jennifer, we'll have to sing "Love at Home" again today.

(HEATHER enters from MR wearing Church clothes.)

JENNIFER: I don't care if we sing Jingle Bells, just so long as I can lead it wearing my gold belt!

(HEATHER exits to Kit.)

JENNIFER: *(Cont'd.)* Mom, have you seen it?

SISTER BINGHAM: Have you tried looking in the dirty clothes? Everything else seems to turn up there,

(SB exits to BR, JENNIFER exits to MR.)

End of Freeview

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