THE NEW MINISTER'S WIFE

1-Act Comedy

Adapted by Susan Shore
from the original by N. Wanda Rapier

Performance Rights

To copy this text is an infringement of the federal copyright law as is to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Call the publisher for further scripts and licensing information.

On all programs and advertising the author's name must appear as well as this notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Co."

PUBLISHED BY
ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
www.95church.com
© 1989 by Eldridge Publishing Company

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://95church.com/new-ministers-wife

STORY OF PLAY

It is the duty of the Ladies' Aid to offer the new minister's wife a formal, official welcome. It is a bit stressful at best, especially since the ladies have heard the new minister's wife is clever, dignified, formal, and used to the social activities of a much larger town. They want to make a good impression.

They have gathered at the home Alice Weems, President of the Ladies' Aid, to rehearse a "classy" reception and formal greeting which they want to present graciously and easily. They rehearse and leave for the new minister's home.

The new minister's wife, Mrs. Williams, in reality, is a meek little person, just as anxious to please as the ladies. They arrive to find her home in utter confusion.

A case of beer, delivered by mistake, is in the middle of the floor. And she has tumbled just before they arrived and hurriedly and absent-mindedly comes to the door with a picture frame hanging around her neck. The dumbfounded ladies are too astonished to speak, but finally "come to" long enough to present a garbled version of their program, letting their subconscious thoughts slip through and betray them, to their bewilderment and chagrin. They feel they are hopeless until their laughter starts. Delightful and humorous, this play will enhance any church gathering.

PLAYING TIME: About 30 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(12 women)

ALICE WEEMS: President of Ladies' Aid; speaks forcefully.
SAMANTHA: Timid, meek, rolls eyes, laughably confused.
SUZIE: Restless, talkative, awkward.
SARIE: Her twin; an echo.
DINA: Jumpy, wiggles nose.
ASTER: Slow, deliberate, serious.
MERTY: Vivacious; plays piano.
BEANNA: Quarrelsome, bony.
GRANDMA: Hard of hearing, speaks loudly.
TINY: Loud clothes accentuate her big size; sings a solo.
MRS. WILLIAMS: The new minister's wife; small, bird-like, shy.
DELIVERY BOY: May be played by a small woman.

TIME: Present day.

PLACE: Any small town.
Scene 1: Mrs. Weems' living room.
Scene 2: Mrs. Williams' living room.

COSTUMES

May be modern, although it is amusing if the attics and trunks of the producing group are raided for old-fashioned and outlandish dresses and hats.

PRODUCTION NOTES

While the play is in two scenes, the actual stage setting remains the same. As the living room of Alice Weems, furnishing on the set are simple, yet tasteful, indicating a family of moderate means. A piano is to one side. There should be enough facilities for 8 or 10 of the women to sit. Only one entrance is required, which may be located anywhere convenient for the stage setting, preferably UPS.

The change to Mrs. Williams' living room is effected by covering the rearranged furniture with sheets, and adding a variety of crates and boxes, resulting in the general confusion which accompanies moving.

Two different chairs, uncovered, are added to the setting and placed DS, where they are conspicuous. One has been prepared beforehand. The legs are sawed almost in two, so that they are sure to break with Tiny's weight.

There is a footstool at wall opposite from entrance door, and by it, a picture, leaning against the wall. Another picture leans a little distance from first. The one nearest footstool is a "sham" picture of paper pasted tightly to a frame, so that the paper will "pop" over Mrs. Williams' head and let her head stick through. There must be a nail already in the wall above the footstool; another nail is tied in the chord of the picture and a hammer is lying by the footstool. Mrs. Williams carries a dust cloth, which drops in the tumble.

Properties include a case of beer bottles which the delivery boy carries on. Since this is really a one-act play, the change between scenes should be as short as possible.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: SAMANTHA, SUZIE and SARIE, DINA, and ALICE are seated in the latter's living room. It is slightly after lunch time, early fall. They sit there silently with their hands folded in their laps and sober expressions on their faces. Their attitudes are so identical as to be humorous. They shift slightly, cross and uncross feet; look at each other and away and keep the silence long enough to become comical. Finally, Samantha offers timidly.)

SAMANTHA: Oh, dear. I hate welcoming new ministers' wives. You have to be so … so…
DINA: *(Wiggling nose twice.)* Has anybody seen 'er?
ALICE: No, we haven't seen her.
DINA: Don't know what she's like. *(Nose up and down.)*
ALICE: I heard she was very proper.
SAMANTHA: *(Big-eyed.)* Oh, of course!
ALICE: I mean, particilar. *(Pronounced as spelled.)*
SUZIE: *(Waving one hand outward.)* There you are!

(SARIE waves hand outward in identical manner, wordless. DINA sighs audibly and sniffs nose, wiggles in chair.)

ALICE: Well, of course, girls, we've got to do our best. We're all going over there and give her an official welcome. We'll try to act just right and make a good impression. We're just common human beings and of course we have our little squabbles and troubles and problems, but we can start out right, you know, dignified and sort of be ... well ...
SUZIE: Oh, of course! *(Nodding head.)*

(SARIE nods head.)

DINA: Remember once we entertained that professor visiting from Devonshire?
SAMANTHA: And was he proper!
ALICE: Yes, we showed up well on that.

DINA: All but Suzie's pie!
SUZIE: Oh, it wasn't so bad. I've seen you make worse.
ALICE: Girls! A little practice won't do any harm!
SAMANTHA: When are the girls coming? Do we have to wait?
ALICE: Of course. We all want to go over in a body.
SAMANTHA: If not in spirit ...
ALICE: What?
SAMANTHA: Nothing.
SUZIE: That sounded more like Merty than you, Samantha.
ALICE: Here they come now!

(NOISE offstage. Door opens. Enter ASTER, MERTY, BEANNA, GRANDMA, and TINY. There is general ad-libbing, with numerous "Hellos," "Good afternoons," and calling each other by name.)

TINY: Just about everybody is here now.
ALICE: Well! We were just waiting for you girls. Come in and sit down.
MERTY: Aren't we going over?
ALICE: We want to plan and rehearse a bit.
MERTY: How do you like my new dress? *(Pirouettes.)* Isn't it cute?
SAMANTHA: Did you make it, Merty?
MERTY: Every stitch. What do we do now, Alice? Here, Grandma, sit here.

(They all find seats; TINY sits next to GRANDMA.)

GRANDMA: Thanks. *(Sits slowly.)*
BEANNA: It just don't seem right to me not to take a lunch along. It ain't hospitable to go to a new minister's house without food!
SUZIE: We're trying this time to be classy.
BEANNA: Classy or not classy, she'd appreciate a mess of food.
SAMANTHA: Alice heard that she is very high-toned and sort of dignified. She might think it was funny.

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://95church.com/new-ministers-wife

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!