QUIET SUNDAY

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The Porters have gone to morning church services and now think they deserve a QUIET Sunday afternoon. But being a Christian takes more than just going to church. God needs them to organize a youth group, help their married daughter and son-in-law who are quarreling, and show the Christian way to an exasperating neighbor. It's confusion, mayhem, and lots of humor with people just like you and me. Entertaining with a good message. Perfect for Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday or anytime.

STAGE SETTING

A homey, well-used living room with fairly modern decor. Contains a sofa, chairs, bookcase, tables, lamps, etc. One large picture of Jesus hangs in a prominent place. There is a phone. Two exits. One for outside and one leading to kitchen. Third exit could be used as if for bedroom.

Playing Time: 45 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 3 w, 1 boy or girl)

ANDY PORTER: An ordinary Christian father and church member, about 45 years old. Good natured and dedicated. Humorous.

ETHEL PORTER: His wife, and mother of their two children. Equally good natured with a feeling of responsibility toward her church and the Lord's work. A motherly type.

STEVIE: Boy or girl, about 12 years old. Full of life and humor like his/her Dad.

DON: Their friend. A typical "joiner" who loves his clubs and the positions he has in them. A Christian who is caught up in the world without realizing it.

MARGARET: A close neighbor, slight hypochondriac and generally confused about most things, especially religion. About Ethel's age or slightly younger.

BETTY: The married and definitely pregnant daughter. Suddenly concerned about her "unsaved" husband. *(Or has HE been "born again"?)*

JIM: The son-in-law who is suddenly in a peck of trouble because of the preacher's sermon.

COSTUMES

All wear typical church clothing. Ethel has a coat, gloves, and purse and later puts on an apron over her dress. Andy changes his suit coat for a sweater and Stevie can have a change of clothing.

SOUND EFFECTS

Telephone. Doorbell. Muffin tin or cookie sheet falling offstage. Suitable soft music in prayer scene. Piano may or may not be used for the short singing episode between Ethel and Andy. Any suitable song can be used.

HAND PROPERTIES

Sunday paper, Bible, pamphlets, coffee cup, mixing bowl with whipped topping and egg beater, kitchen towel, glass of water.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: It is Sunday noon after church services. MR. and MRS. PORTER and STEVIE enter their living room. They are a little late getting home from church and they begin to gripe.)

ETHEL: *(As SHE enters.)* Oh, my roast again! If our services just wouldn't last so long. *(Dashes toward kitchen as SHE sheds hat, gloves, coat on the sofa.)*

STEVIE: Burned beef again! If Nero's garden smelled like this … *(Makes face and grabs for the Sunday paper on the sofa. It falls apart as SHE grabs the comics. She sprawls in chair.)*

ANDY: *(As HE puts his Bible on desk or bookcase.)* What has Nero the Emperor got to do with anything? Stevie. *(No answer.)* Stevie!

STEVIE: *(Lost in reading.)* Huh?

ANDY: *(Pushes paper down from STEVIE'S rapt face.)* I said what does Nero's garden have to do with our Sunday dinner? *(Sniffs.)* Our BURNED Sunday dinner? *(Relaxes on sofa.)*

STEVIE: Don't you ever listen to the preacher, Pop? How Christians were soaked in oil and used for gas lights and...

(ETHEL, putting on apron, has entered in time to hear.)

ETHEL: Now Stevie, I won't have you showing disrespect for those poor people even if we didn't know them.

STEVIE: Aw, they've been dead for years.

ETHEL: That doesn't makes any difference. They suffered for the faith and that's more than we can say for anyone around here. *(SHE throws a look at both of THEM as they sprawl in Sunday idleness.)*

ANDY: *(Sniffing.)* I don't know if you can go that far.

ETHEL: Andrew Porter don't you dare uphold our daughter in this ... making fun of those poor Christians.

ETHEL: (*Continued.)* As Pastor Gilmore said, they knew what it meant to defend the faith once delivered to the saints. We've grown soft and lazy!

ANDY: *(With hands behind HIS head, stretching out.)* Exactly, Ethel. Exactly.

ETHEL: It's time we had another nice, long talk. *(Yanks STEVIE'S feet from arm of chair and forces her to sit straight.)* A nice long talk.

STEVIE: Oh, no, Mom!

ETHEL: Including Betty and Jim!

STEVIE: Not again. The last time we had a nice, long talk *(Mimics HER expression.)* you got us up three mornings in a row a half-hour early ...

ETHEL: So we could find time for devotions. I still don't know what happened to those resolutions.

ANDY: *(Helpfully from behind paper.)* You forgot to set the alarm clock.

ETHEL: Was your arm broken?

STEVIE: Betty ought to be glad she's married. *(Puts emphasis where SHE is misunderstood.)*

ANDY: *(Sitting up, all ears.)* Isn't she?

ETHEL: Of course she is. What makes you -

ANDY: Stevie just said ...

STEVIE: I just said, she ought to be glad she's married so she won't have to get up at dawn to read the beGETS. That's all I said.

ETHEL: *(Making a pun.)* How would you like to be GETTING yourself into some other clothes … *(Sniffs.)* Oh, the cauliflower ... *(Exits rapidly.)*

ANDY: Go on, daughter. You heard your mother. Here, wait a minute ... *(Starts to undo HIS tie but changes his mind.) ...* Never mind. I'll change, too. I'm not going out any more today. This is going to be a nice, QUIET Sunday.

STEVIE: *(From doorway.)* That's what you think. Mom's got plans. I heard her telling somebody or other at church this morning that we would be <u>glad</u> to pick them up for services tonight.

End of Freeview

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