

THE TWENTY-FIVE CENT MINISTRY

By Lisa Johnson

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Dedication

This play is dedicated to the congregation of Hope Presbyterian Church in Spicer, Minnesota. Thank you for supporting my dramas. I especially want to thank the members of the drama committee of the church. They gave so much of their time to ministering to others with their talents. Thank you Brenda Bratberg for buying and wearing the orange robe to church. Thank you Susan Sletto for encouraging me to write a play about the orange robe. And thank you God for whispering the story in my ear. You make my work easy.

Lisa Johnson

Author's Note

Most dramas have a story behind their creation. This one does too. One Sunday a member of our congregation came to church dressed in a neon orange, ornate robe. We had just done several skits for the advent season, so it made sense that she was wearing a costume for a skit. However, that was not the reason she was wearing the robe. This robe had been passed around as a sort of gag gift between a few of the women of the church. The pastor's wife came and asked me if I could write a skit about the robe with a church community theme. I shook my head and said, "No, it's not that easy." But I guess God wanted this story told. He came to me one night and whispered in my ear. This play is the result of that rendezvous with God. I was only too happy to assist in telling the story.

ORIGINAL CAST LIST

Cammy: Brenda Bratberg
Milly: Darlene Bratberg
Mavis: Sharolyn Lind
Trisha: Lisa Johnson
Lucy: Elizabeth Shekleton
Jon: Roger Johnson
Beth: Barb Lindahl
Chyna Barnes: Cheryl Shekleton
Greg Reed: Tim Bradford
Jackie Reed: Kathy Bradford
George Styles: Terry Sletto
Irma Styles: Pat Meinert
Erwin (Eleanor): Gaylord Lind

STORY OF THE PLAY

A simple but bright orange robe, discarded years earlier and found at a church bazaar sale, makes an incredible journey of ministry. Trisha, the first person we meet, buys the robe for 25-cents, and on a wild whim, wears it to meet her daughter's future in-laws. She relates how wearing it earlier helped her son recover from a severe flu and ends up giving the "lucky" robe to them. The robe provides a comic moment to the parents, a moment which leads to them talking again to get their marriage back on track. Soon they give the robe to Chyna, a lonely newcomer at church. Hard to miss while wearing the robe, Chyna meets new friends and she soon gives it to Jackie, who is ill. The robe "inspires" Jackie to seek needed medical treatment. From Jackie the robe is accidentally given to a grieving widower, George. He finds it was the original robe he gave his beloved wife so many years ago and is so comforted by the fact that soon he is willing to give the robe to someone else. There's a knock at George's door and it looks as if the robe has more ministering to do.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

(Approx. 3 m, 8 w, 1 flex. Doubling possible.)

CAMMY: Church member, 20-30 years old.
MILLY: Church member, 50-60 years old.
MAVIS: Milly's sister, 60-70 years old.
TRISHA: Mavis's daughter, early to mid 40s.
LUCY: Trisha's daughter, early 20s.
JON: Beth's husband, mid 40s to early 50s.
BETH: Wife of Jon, mid 40s.
CHYNA: Lonely newcomer, woman, early 20s.
GREG: An active church member, late 20s.
JACKIE: Greg's sister, early 30s.
GEORGE: Recent widower, mid 60s to mid 70s.
ELEANOR (or ERWIN): George's neighbor, mid 60s to 70s.

(Doubling possible: Jon can double as George. Milly and Mavis can double as Beth, Jackie, or Eleanor. Cammy can double as Lucy.)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Early October morning at the bazaar in the church fellowship hall.

Scene 2: Two weeks later at Trisha's house.

Scene 3: Two weeks later at the church fellowship hall with a table and chairs.

Scene 4: Outside Jackie's apartment.

Scene 5: A short time later at George's home.

Scene 6: One week later at George's home.

SETTING

Sc 1: A church fellowship hall with several tables set up. One table has craft items, one has jewelry and knickknacks. Upstage is a clothes rack full of old clothes, one of the items being the ornate orange robe.

Sc. 2: Interior of Trisha's house. Trisha's bedroom is played downstage with an implied exit to bathroom. The living room should have implied exit to dining room. There is a door between the two rooms. The living room should have an outside door.

Sc. 3: Church fellowship hall with table and chairs.

Sc. 4: Outside Jackie's house. Exterior doorway frame.

Sc. 5: George's living room comfortably furnished. Door with a small hallway on the other side.

PROPS

Cash box, purses or fanny packs, bazaar-selling items, orange robe, animal earrings, small dress, box, coffee cup, two paper bags, purse and keys, gloves or scarf, McDonald's bag, Tupperware with food, Bible, nurse's bag with nursing items.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: It is mid-October at the church bazaar. CAMMY is sitting by a table with arts and crafts items.)

MILLY: *(ENTERING with MAVIS.)* Where's Trisha?

MAVIS: *(Somewhat irritated.)* She was right behind us.
(Goes back out the door.)

CAMMY: Morning, Milly! Here for the best buys, huh?

MILLY: I know Doris Nelson's crafts will be gone by seven a.m.

MAVIS: *(ENTERS again.)* She fell asleep in the back seat.

MILLY: I thought she was awful quiet.

(TRISHA ENTERS, somewhat tired.)

TRISHA: You women are crazy. I just woke up a robin on my way in.

MILLY: Well, I guess you'll get the worm this morning.

TRISHA: That's supposed to be an enticement, Aunt Milly?

MILLY: *(Crosses over to her TRISHA, wagging her finger.)*
Listen here, young lady. Bazaar Saturday comes but once a year. There are treasures here. If you're late, someone else will walk off with them.

TRISHA: Treasures, huh? *(SHE holds up a craft that looks like it was made by a two year old.)* I bet this baby has been at every church bazaar this church has held since its doors were opened in the 1800s.

MAVIS: I can't believe you're making fun of this. Remember the Christmas ornament you gave me?

TRISHA: Mom, I was in second grade. Besides, chartreuse was a hot color that year.

MAVIS: For angels? It really was the big yellow polka dots that completed the ensemble.

TRISHA: Well, I spilled a dot of her blonde hair on her robe, so I decided it was easier to add a few more dots than to try and wipe it off. I can't believe you're making fun of my masterpiece.

MAVIS: Trisha Ann, where do I hang that ornament every year?

TRISHA: Mom

MAVIS: Where?!

TRISHA: On the tree.

MAVIS: Front and center. It's the first ornament everyone sees when they look at my tree.

TRISHA: Yeah. And everyone thinks to themselves, that Mrs. Thomas, she's a nice lady, but a bit touched in the head. She's the church's "eccentric" old gal. It's safe to say hello, but don't get too close. She may just pull you into her madness.

MAVIS: They think all that because I have an angel with a chartreuse robe with big yellow polka dots hanging on my Christmas tree?

TRISHA: People have made judgments on much less than that.

MILLY: Trisha, you really are strange. I'm sure you'll find something perfect for yourself here.

TRISHA: Ha Ha! You admit that the stuff here is strange.

(MAVIS and MILLY wander off and look at the things for sale. TRISHA wanders closer to CAMMY.)

CAMMY: Morning, Trisha. Did your mom and aunt talk you into rummaging with them this morning?

TRISHA: Free breakfast.

CAMMY: I knew it had to be something like that. Seriously, you can find some really great treasures at the church bazaar.

TRISHA: That's all well and fine, but couldn't it wait until noon?

CAMMY: By that time someone else could have already sneaked that piece of gold out of here before you got out of bed.

TRISHA: It's a conspiracy.

CAMMY: By the way, how's Zack?

End of Freeview

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