

EMPTY TANK

by RIKKI SCHWARTZ

GENRE: Drama/Comedy

SYNOPSIS: A couple faces the stress, exhaustion, and other more serious pitfalls of living the good life.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: The marital spat in the scene has a lot of individual moments, all of which serve as pebbles that build to the ultimate avalanche. Consequently, be careful in rehearsal to find the 'flow' of the scene. Take care in blocking each separate moment, but save plenty of rehearsal time for putting it all together. Make sure your actors are comfortable with the overall rhythm of the scene, from beginning to end, before it gets on it feet for an audience.

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 3

TOPIC: Marriage, Family, Priorities

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 10:38-42, Philippians 4:6-7

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Seeker Service, Sermon Introduction

CHARACTERS:

ROBERTA—wife

TED—husband

JEFF—preteen or teenage son

PROPS: Interior decorator samples, portfolio, bags of groceries, cell phone, purse, keys, backpack

COSTUMES: Ted is in a suit/tie. Roberta is dressed "stylishly." Jeff is dressed for school.

SOUND: Three wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Living room and kitchen table; both are unkempt

Drama Ministry

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www.DramaMinistry.com
ISSN 1084-5917

Drama Ministry is a division of
Belden Worship Resources
www.beldenworshipresources.com

Publisher: **Regi Stone**

Executive Editor: **Kimberlee Crisafulli** / Assistant Editor: **Scott Crain**

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EMPTY TANK *by Rikki Schwartz*

ROBERTA: *(On cell phone—walks in juggling purse, briefcase, mail, keys, and interior design samples. Everything spills onto table and floor before she has a chance to get it to the kitchen table—all the while she is talking very cheerfully.)*

Don't be silly, Lydia, if you don't like the taupe after all, we'll try a different color. I can bring the samples back tomorrow morning and we'll see what grabs ya this time. Of COURSE not, that's my job; it is absolutely no trouble at all. Hey—slowly but surely, we are narrowing it down, right? So, what time tomorrow? Oh...um...can we do eight instead? *(Exhales)* Okay... *(Trying to sound cheerful)* No, seven's fine. Noooo, seven is fine. Oh for heaven's sake, stop. You are NOT a lunatic. You are not. You are NOT a lunatic; you are a homeowner. Okay...see you at seven.

TED: *(Walked in with briefcase and keys during her phone conversation)* Hello, beautiful. I'm home, I'm exhausted, and I'm starving.

ROBERTA: *(Slams down cell—ignoring TED)* Lunatic!

TED: *(Picks up the mail that has spilled onto the table/floor, plops down on sofa, loosens necktie, begins to go through mail—thinks that ROBERTA has just called him a lunatic.)* Excuse me?

ROBERTA: *(Picking spilled items up off the floor as she speaks most of the ensuing dialog)* You'll have to take Frances to practice tomorrow morning because this lunatic...

TED: Tomorrow? I can't tomorrow. I've got a breakfast meeting with Roger Pruett.

ROBERTA: NOTHING pleases this woman. Nothing. I've never put this many hours into one client. *(Realizes what he just said)* I thought your meeting with Roger was this morning?

TED: It got moved to tomorrow.

ROBERTA: So if your morning was freed up, why did I take your car in for service today?

TED: For the same reason you can't dig a hole in quicksand, darlin'; my morning "filled up" about two minutes after it was "freed up." By the way, are you trying to see how many empty fast food bags will fit into your car? It's disgusting; I could barely find the radio. Oh, and you're on "E."

ROBERTA: Nice, Ted. Whenever I borrow the SUV, I make sure to fill it up for you—can't you show me the same courtesy?

TED: Sorry—I didn't even notice till I pulled it into the garage just now. BUT *(Cheerfully)*... it wouldn't be on "E" *(stresses the "Es")* if I hadn't used it to go on a very Extensive shopping Expedition for YOUR Expensive birthday present this evening—because I am, say it with me: the most wonderful and thoughtful husband on earth.