

MANIPULATION OBSERVATION

by CHRISTINA MORALES AND SANTOS TABOR

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: A wildlife observer comments on his latest subject of study: the manipulation ritual of the American married couple.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: This spoof of marriage can afford to be a little campy, but be careful in going overboard—if the portrayals are too over the top, you risk the audience missing the point.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 3

TOPIC: Marriage

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ephesians 5:22-33

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Sermon Starter

CHARACTERS:

HUSBAND

WIFE

ANNOUNCER

PROPS: Pot, newspaper

COSTUMES: Modern day

SOUND: Three wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: A kitchen

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MANIPULATION OBSERVATION *by Christina Morales and Santos Tabor*

WIFE is cooking at stove. HUSBAND is reading newspaper at table. ANNOUNCER is heard but not seen, and is using a bad British accent like in a National Geographic show.

ANNOUNCER: Today we have the distinct privilege of watching the private manipulation ritual of the species Spouse-ious disfunction-ous. The female of the species weaves a transparent web of illusion and forethought to trap the unsuspecting male into fulfilling her wishes. Let's watch as this complicated dance unfolds in their natural environment.

WIFE: Wow. I've had such a hard day. I would really appreciate it if someone would set the table. It would be one less thing for me to do.

ANNOUNCER: Notice how the wife carefully sets the trap.

HUSBAND: Did you say something, dear?

ANNOUNCER: A typical response from the male of the species. Though enthralled with his own daily ritual, he still instinctively uses his own natural self-defense mechanism of sports-section hibernation.

WIFE: It would mean a lot to me if you would set the table. After all, I am making your favorite dinner.

ANNOUNCER: *(Reluctantly)* Oh, all right.

HUSBAND: He took the bait! This is an amazing event that we are witnessing! Guilt is one of the basic manipulation tools in this very hostile environment.

WIFE: Is tomorrow Friday, sweetheart?

ANNOUNCER: Could she possibly have the finesse to set two traps in a row?

HUSBAND: Yesss... *(Waiting for the catch)*

ANNOUNCER: By the tone of the male's voice, he senses danger in the air.

WIFE: Do you know that John and Lisa go out at least once a week for a date night?

HUSBAND: That's great, hon.

WIFE: You haven't taken me out to dinner in such a long time. But that's okay. I know that you don't make quite as much money as John does...but it sure is tough being cooped up in this house all week...

ANNOUNCER: The clever beast cunningly uses her fangs to dig deep into her husband's most vulnerable area: his ego. We'll see if he can avoid this perilous trap.