

A LEADER'S NIGHTMARE

by RIKKI SCHWARTZ

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: The nightmare of a small group leader (based on the Christopher Durang play *The Actor's Nightmare*).

DIRECTOR'S TIP: The genre allows for Sally and many of the other characters to be a little overdone, but John should be played as naturally as possible to heighten the comedy of his odd situation.

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 7

TOPIC: Fear, Leadership, Church Life

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 Peter 5:1-4

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Workshop/seminar on recruiting, Educating small group leaders

CHARACTERS:

JOHN—small group leader

SALLY—John's wife and small group member #2)

SUE—small group member #3

MAX—small group member #4

EARL— small group member #5

Two additional group members (no lines)

PROPS: Seven Bibles, seven Bible study guides, snacks, plates and cups, briefcase

COSTUMES: Sally wears a Donna Reed-type dress and white apron; John wears a suit and overcoat. Other characters wear black.

SOUND: Five wireless microphones. There is a sound of a "dream-harp" as lights come up.

LIGHTING: "Dream-like" lighting—maybe some "fog" being injected into the air

SETTING: A living room

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A LEADER'S NIGHTMARE *by Rikki Schwartz*

Lights up on SALLY, who sits in front of SUE, MAX, and two other Small Group Members in SALLY's living room. Everyone has a study guide and a Bible in his or her hands or laps. Nobody is speaking; everyone looks a bit uncomfortable. JOHN enters the scene wearing a business suit and overcoat and carrying a briefcase.

SALLY: *(As JOHN enters, she beckons quickly to him—trying to remain calm and kind through gritted teeth—obviously embarrassed and nervous)* THERE you are; I was getting nervous, sweetheart. I told them you must have been delayed by traffic, and that we HAVE to get you a new cell phone.

JOHN: *(Looks very confused)* What? Are all of these people here to sell me a cell phone?

SALLY: *(Laughs loudly and nervously)* Oh John—you are such a stitch. *(To group on sofa)* He is such a stitch. *(Quickly strips JOHN of his briefcase and his overcoat, while JOHN obliges by standing motionless, but has no idea what is going on. She then hands him his Bible).* Here you go, darling. Do you need anything else to get started? I've got sausage puffs in the oven.

JOHN: *(Stares at Bible for a second)* Sweetheart, may I speak with you for a moment?

SALLY: *(Looks a bit panicked)* Well, of course, dear, but we don't want to keep the group waiting any longer than we already have, do we?

JOHN: No, of course not. *(To group on sofa)* This will only take a moment; I apologize. *(Pulls SALLY to the side)* Sally, what are you doing? Who ARE those people?

SALLY: That's not funny, John. Honestly, enough is enough. You're embarrassed to be so late; I understand that. But, you're going to have to just bite the bullet and get on with the meeting. Thankfully, Earl is going to be late anyway, so...

JOHN: *(Tries for a few seconds to grasp everything she is saying—looks at her—at the group, at his Bible, etc. Finally...)* "Get on," how?

SALLY: *(Picks up study guide and hands it to JOHN—very fatigued and irritated with JOHN's "foolery" —sarcastically)* Well, let's see, John. We did lesson ten last week, so I'm thinking we go over lesson eleven today? But then, I'm not the small group leader *(Does quote signs with her fingers, almost as if to mock JOHN's "title" in the group),* so if you've chosen to shake things up...

JOHN: Lesson eleven?

SALLY: Go, John—I've got sausage puffs! *(Pushes him roughly back to the group; she exits in a panic)*