

Drama Ministry®

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THE DRESS

by Rikki Schwartz

GENRE: Drama/Light Comedy

SYNOPSIS: A boyfriend and girlfriend fail to communicate regarding a dress she is considering for his class reunion.

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 2

TOPIC: Communication, Relationships

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 Peter 3:1-7

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Seeker Service

CHARACTERS:

SAMANTHA—girlfriend

PAUL—boyfriend

PROPS: TV remote control, a glass of iced tea

COSTUMES: Samantha is in a very formal dress; Paul is dressed in daily casual wear.

SOUND: Two wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: A living room

Drama Ministry

service@DramaMinistry.com
www.DramaMinistry.com
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Director's Tip:

Comedy works best when it is given the chance to build. As this scene opens, we should have a sense that all is well. There isn't a hint of tension. If we start out with tension in the air, we have nowhere to go and the scene will quickly "flatline."

Samantha has a lot of tension building and she has a lot of steam to let loose. On page two, she already has the stage direction "exasperated." But we're only on page two, so she can't be ready to blow her stack. And it's not as funny if she just keeps getting madder at Paul. If she does that, we'll start feeling sorry for Paul and stop feeling anything for Samantha. So allow Samantha to build her frustration to the point on page two where she says, "I got that, Paul. The dress is great. Great is the dress..." In her next line, she has momentarily forgotten about the dress and is appalled anew when it occurs to her that Paul thinks she's fat. The actress has a great opportunity to take the audience on a roller coaster ride here for a minute. She took us up the hill with her frustration almost reaching a boiling point. We lingered at the top for a moment, and then with "You think I'm fat, don't you?" we get to plunge down the hill. Then Samantha really gets going.

Go through the script line by line with the actress to plot out the roller coaster ride.

With Samantha taking us on such a great ride, we need to be careful not to leave Paul behind. He spends a lot of time reacting in this script, so we need to find solid subtext for him. Work with the actor to figure out what Paul really wants from this relationship and what he's really thinking about. What does he want out of the class reunion? Has he even thought about it half as much as Samantha has? All of this subtext will make his responses to Samantha's antics more appealing and more empathetic.

We've all had communication problems—most of us even with members of the opposite sex who seemed at the time to be from another planet. But Samantha and Paul are the extreme. To help your actors understand the context intended for this script, read with them the Scripture passage on which it is based: 1 Peter 3:1–7. Here, we are told, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." (vv. 3–4) At the very least, Samantha is forgetting this instruction as she obsesses over what to wear to Paul's high school reunion. Perhaps Paul's sentiment is right when he says he'd rather she wear a potato sack so the other guys won't drool over her, but in stereotypical "guy" fashion, he doesn't express that thought so well.

Spend a little time in rehearsal talking with your actors about the stereotypes portrayed in this script. Then decide together which ones you will emphasize and which you will downplay to make the point of the script clear.