

SIX ACCUSERS

a Christian one act play

by Barbara Tuttle

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Scriptural References

Galatians 5:22-23- Galatians 6:9- 1 Corinthians 4:12- 1 Corinthians 6:7 – 1 Corinthians 6:18- Ephesians 2:1- Matthew 25:35- Luke 21: 13-19 – Philippians 4:5 – Philippians 2:14 – Philippians 2:3 – Philippians 1:28- Colossians 2:8- James 4:11 – 1 Timothy 2:2 – James 1:27- 1 Peter 1:7 – 1 Peter 2:17- 1 Peter 2:23 – 1 Peter 3:15-16

MR. DEDMON: Summary: JACK FORRESTER, Harvest Grain Sales Rep, is on trial for being a Christian. He is found guilty when MR. DEDMON, the malicious Prosecuting Attorney, examines the testimony of six witnesses. Yet things are not as they seem – far from it.

Characters:

BAILIFF

JUDGE WILLIAM B. HUNTER – presiding judge

WILL DEDMON – prosecuting attorney

JACK FORRESTER – the accused

JUANITA GONZALES – elderly widow

R.J. TIMMER – homeless ex-con

MICKEY BRIGGS – community orphan

WILLY ARMSTRONG – employer at Harvest Grain

BILL GLEASON – accountant

MELODY FORRESTER – wife of accused

Setting: A Courtroom

Props: gavel, Judge's podium with nameplate, chair for Judge, chair labeled "Accused," chair labeled "Witness," 1 or 2 benches for witnesses, handcuffs, inheritance paper

Running Time: 30 minutes

***JUDGE HUNTER** is at the Judge's Bench, **MR. FORRESTER** sits in the Accused Chair, and the witnesses sit on the bench waiting to be called, as the court proceedings begin. **The BAILIFF** [stands on the right side of the Judge]. **WILL DEDMON**, the Prosecuting Attorney, is posed nearby. Handcuffs are visible in the courtroom.*

BAILIFF: [*steps forward*] Judge William B. Hunter is presiding today.

JUDGE HUNTER: [*taps gavel*] Let there be order in this courtroom. Before us is the case of Mr. Jack Forrester, who is accused of being a Christian. Mr. Will Dedmon will serve as Prosecuting Attorney. Mr. Forrester has chosen to represent himself in this case. Let the proceedings begin.

MR. DEDMON: The charges brought against Mr. Forrester today are very grave. It is a matter of the

Almighty, if there is one, to look into his heart and see what he believes. However it is widely accepted that what a man believes, *really* believes, will be revealed in his conduct and character. So I will show the court that Mr. Forrester is indeed a Christian, by establishing that his conduct and his character are consistently suspect. I call as my first witness, Juanita Gonzales.

MS. GONZALES [approaches judge]

JUDGE HUNTER: State your name, please.

MS. GONZALES: Juanita Gonzales.

JUDGE HUNTER: Please be seated.

MR. DEDMON *[approaches witness chair]* I understand that you are a widow who lives on the same street as Mr. Forrester.

MS. GONZALES: That's right. He is such a good neighbor to me.

MR. DEDMON: *[sneering]* Is that right? Why do you say that, Ms. Gonzales?

MS. GONZALES: I cared for my husband night and day, after he had his stroke. Mr. Forrester and his son kept my lawn mowed all summer. He and his boy do everything together. And when my Carlos died, they kept right on mowing my lawn. And shoveling my driveway. Just about anything I need, I know I can go to Mr. Forrester, and his family will look after me. His wife is just a darlin' too, you know.

MR. DEDMON: *[sarcastically]* Yes, yes, happy little family. Now, concerning Mr. Forrester – do you ever hear him complaining about all this extra mowing and shoveling?

MS. GONZALES: Goodness, no. Mr. Forrester wears a smile on his face. He never makes me feel bad about helping with these things... still I know it must be hard for him, taking time away from his own life to help me out.

MR. DEDMON: *[interrupting]* Well now! Are you telling us that the plaintiff has some trouble going

on at his own house ? Say Ms. Gonzales, neighbors can hear things, see things. What kind of trouble do you see down at the Forrester place? What do you suppose is really going on inside that house?

MS. GONZALES: Oh I don't see any arguin' or any mischief down there at all, Mr. Dedmon. Jack and Melody live a quiet, peaceful life. They are so devoted to each other. And their son, Matthew – he's rambunctious, like any boy. But such a nice lad. He loves hanging around with his Dad and...

MR. DEDMON: *[interrupting]* That will be enough, Ms. Gonzales. *(Looks at judge)* See how they love one another! *(looks at accused)* It's not looking very good for you, Mr. Forrester *(pauses and studies his notes)* I call my second witness, a bum from 34th Street.

R.J. TIMMER [approaches judge]

JUDGE HUNTER: State your name, please.

R. J. TIMMER: *[wipes dirty sleeve dramatically across face.]* R.J. Timmer.

JUDGE HUNTER: Please be seated.

MR. DEDMON: Where do you live, Mr. Timmer?

R.J. TIMMER : Me? I don't really have no home. Mostly I sleep under the 34th street bridge. I fell on some real hard times. Say, do you want to hear about them?

MR. DEDMON: No, I sure don't. What I want you to tell me is...how do you know the Accused?

R.J. TIMMER: *[looks at Mr. Forrester and smile]* You mean Mr. Forrester? Oh he's a real nice man! One day he and the Mrs. were riding their bikes and they saw me waking up under the bridge. Mr. Forrester came over and introduced himself. Then he and the Mrs. took me out for lunch!

MR. DEDMON *(sneering)* Well, isn't that interesting. How was your lunch, Mr. Timmer?

R.J. TIMMER : Oh mann, it was *good*...I had fish and sticks and slaw and I ate till I couldn't eat no more. They was so nice, I wanted to give them somethin' too. But I didn't have nothin', ya know. *[pauses with hand on chin, then looks up and says brightly]* I did share some of my dirty jokes with 'em, though!

MR. DEDMON: *[amused]* Did you now? *[looks over at Mr. Forrester, knowingly]* And how did Mr. Forrester like your jokes?

R.J. TIMMER : Well, it's hard to tell. He didn't respond at all. I think he changed the subject! Yeah, that's it. He changed the subject and invited me to church with him!

MR. DEDMON: *[laughing hysterically]* Did he, now? Did you go to church?

R.J. TIMMER : Naw...I haven't taken him up on that, yet. But I should. We're good buddies now, me and Mr. Forrester. He still comes and takes me out to lunch, every other Thursday!

MR. DEDMON [approaches Judge]

MR. DEDMON: Note that he goes around doing good to everybody! *[Turns to R.J. Timmer]* That will be all, Mr. Timmer.

R.J. TIMMER [returns to bench]

MR. DEDMON: *[spoken with disgust]* Mr. Forrester, why do you have this penchant for doing such strange things? Mr. R.J. Timmer here lives under a bridge! Did you know that he's an **ex-con**?!

MR. FORRESTER: Yes sir, I know. He told me that he served some time.

MR. DEDMON: *[mocking tone]* And you respond by having regular lunch dates with him?

MR. FORRESTER: I enjoy taking him out to lunch, Sir. Now that he's out of prison, I've been trying to encourage him to apply for a janitorial job at my company. Maybe I could help him get on his feet there. He hasn't taken me up on it yet, but I'm praying for him all the same...

MR. DEDMON: **What?** I just don't get it. R.J. Timmer Is a bum. Why waste your time on him?

MR. FORRESTER: I guess I see myself in him. I mean, I'm just as needy as my friend R.J. The Bible says I was a like a dead man in my sins. I guess when Jesus looks at my friend and me, he sees the same thing.

MR. DEDMON: What the heck are you talking about?

MR. FORRESTER: Well, when Jesus looks at me and R.J., he sees two men in need of a Savior...

MR. DEDMON: I am warning you – this is very incriminating evidence, Mr. Forrester! Have you no pride?

MR. FORRESTER: I have nothing to boast of, sir.

MR. DEDMON: Nothing, indeed. [*turns to judge*] You won't believe who I'm calling as my next witness, Judge Hunter. [*pointing*] I call that young boy to the stand!

MICKEY BRIGGS approaches Judge

JUDGE HUNTER: State your name, please.

MICKEY: Mickey Briggs

JUDGE HUNTER: Please be seated.

MR. DEDMON: And who are your parents?

MICKEY: My MaMa? I don't know her name. I don't live with her.

MR. DEDMON: [*sarcastically*] Is that right – well where is she?

MICKEY: MaMa's been doin' drugs. I'm not allowed to live with her, so I lives with my Auntie.

MR. DEDMON: And your father?

MICKEY: I don't know him. He left my Mama when I was just a baby about [*holds hands apart about an inch*] “this big.”

MR. DEDMON: [*turns to Judge*] Judge Hunter, this boy is an orphan! Most of our orphans in America are kids like these. Their fathers have run off to who knows where.

JUDGE HUNTER: Yes, this is true. We have many children in our society who are not being raised by their parents. Some of them are growing up in very unstable and tenuous situations. Mr. Dedmon, what bearing does this matter have on the Accused?

MR. DEDMON: I am going to show how the accused helps look after this orphan!

JUDGE HUNTER:[*nods*] Proceed.

MR. DEDMON: [*turning*] to witness chair then points towards Mr. Forrester) So now Mickey, do you know Mr. Forrester over here?

MICKEY: [*looking over at Mr. Forrester, and lighting up*] Well, sure I do! Him and me play ball lots of times. He comes over to Auntie's and gets me. Sometimes he brings us bags of food and stuff! It always makes Auntie real happy.

MR. DEDMON: Where do you and Auntie live?

MICKEY: 78th St. Housing Project, third floor.

MR. DEDMON: [*turning to Accused.*] Now how did you meet this boy, Mr. Forrester? Let me guess...you were running around the housing project, looking for something good to do! [*laughs*]

Mr. FORRESTER: Actually, sir... I met Mickey on the bus. He was riding with his Aunt, and we all got to talking. He just stole my heart. I went home and talked to my wife and son about Mickey. We all agreed that it would be great to spend some time with him.

MR. DEDMON: WHY?!!

MR. FORRESTER : [*innocently*] Why, sir? He's a great kid. He doesn't get much chance to play ball around the housing project.. It's all concrete down there. So on Saturday, my son Matthew and I bring him over to the house for some batting practice. We all have a great time. We really enjoy our backyard pick-up games.

MR. DEDMON: [*sarcastically*] Is that so? Mr. Forrester, where do you work?

MR. FORRESTER: I am a Sales Rep for Harvest Grain Cereals, sir.

MR. DEDMON: Now then, Mr. Forrester, do you think all that loitering around the housing projects is doing any good for your image at Harvest Grain? [*sneers*]

MR. FORRESTER: I never really thought about it, sir. I'm not expected to work on Saturdays, as long as my accounts are active and everything's up to date...

MR. DEDMON: How do you expect to **advance** for Pete's sake? Everybody who wants to get ahead has to work the weekends! And here you are spending your Saturdays with this orphan. Your judgement is inferior, Mr. Forrester. What do you have to say for yourself?

MR. FORRESTER: [*pause*] Nothing, sir.

MR. DEDMON: What a fine defense! [*laughs and turns to Judge*]

MICKEY: [*sniffles and wipes tears*]

JUDGE HUNTER: You may return to the bench, Mickey.

MR. DEDMON: I call my next witness, Mr. Willie Armstrong!

WILLIE ARMSTRONG [*approaches the Judge.*]

