

THE SPEECH JUDGE'S NIGHTMARE

A Humorous Reading

by
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Yes, he had promised to serve as a Judge at the County Speech Tournament. Not that he knew he would enjoy the experience! Oh, no! But for a few hours it would carry him back to his own high school days, when he had earned considerable oratorical renown. It was the aftermath--the reaction--that he dreaded. It was always the same. For twenty-four hours he would live over orations, extempore, declamations, and debate. For that long at least, his mind would reverberate with the nervous tension of it all.

The contest over, Professor Frank Ross arrived home after listening to many spirited and bitterly fought Final Rounds.

ROSS: Well, my dear, I'm later than I expected. And I'm a nervous wreck. It's astonishing what enthusiasm those youngsters can put into their oratorical efforts. I've been giggled at, shrieked at, hushed, threatened, wept over, and argued off my feet until I feel like a fugitive from a nut house. If you don't mind, I'll take a glass of warm milk and go straight to bed. (Yawns, hand over mouth)

And so he does. But not to sleep! Oh, no! It was more of a nightmare, in which Ross relived the most impressive parts of the contest. In rapid succession they came, starting with--(Go very quickly into the character of the typical machine-gun, forceful delivery of the debater)

AFFIRMATIVE: (With many gestures) Here again is definite proof that the U.S. Should Adopt. It is in line with our national policy. We're used to adopting. We've adopted so many things: crop control, bank insurance, unemployment insurance, Old Age--(Stops abruptly with gesture extended toward some woman) Pardon me, Madam! Furthermore, let me read what Hetty Barefacts has to say in her reply to my inquiry. (Quotes from a letter, evidently the wrong one) She says: "In going over our accounts we notice that"--and, mind you, she is an authority.--She says: "we feel that this is merely an oversight and"-- There! (Places letter on desk with note of finality) That ought to be proof enough! In conclusion let me say:-- (Jumps very quickly into dramatic character)

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