

WHY---HUBERT!

A One Act Play

by
Albert Van Antwerp



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106

www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com

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CHARACTERS:

HERBERT SMILEY--A quiet, rather timid young man.

MILLIE--his wife. (Loves to manage, but hasn't faintest notion how.)

MRS. PARMINTER--Millie's mother, a rather sensible person.

COUSIN RONALD--a loud, boisterous person who fancies himself a joker.

OLIVIA--his wife. There's nothing real about Olivia, not even the color of her hair.

JUNIOR--Ronald's son, a boy of about ten. He takes after his father.

CONNIE--Ronald's daughter, a girl of six. An average little girl.

BERT INGRAHAM--a motion picture actor and friend of Hubert. He is on location and made up as a most disreputable bum.

BOB FULLER--another actor who is even more disreputable than his pal.

AUNT CLARA--a rather plump maiden lady.

SCENE: Living-room of the Smiley residence at Beach Park. An arch up C. leads to hall and street door. Down R. a door leads to dining-room.

AT RISE: The stage is empty. From the open dining-room door R. comes the mumble of voices and the clatter of dishes. Hubert enters through arch up C. He groans as the voices in dining-room swell.

CONNIE: (Off R.) Mama, Junior took my ear of corn.

JUNIOR: (Off R.) Aw, I did no such thing!

CON.: Oh--you did so!

OLIVIA: (Off R.) There--there. Mother will give you Uncle Hubert's ear. He won't mind.
(Hubert sighs wearily and tosses his hat onto a convenient chair.)

JUN.: Tattle tale!

MRS. PARMINTER: (Off R.) Pass the tomatoes, please. (Hubert moves toward the dining-room.) I said--
PLEASE pass the tomatoes.

MILLIE: (Off R.) Ronald--Mother wishes the tomatoes.

RONALD: (Off R.) There aren't any left.

MIL.: Well--for goodness sake!

OLIV.: Ronald is very fond of tomatoes.

MRS.P.: Evidently.

RON.: Is this supposed to be a steak, Cousin Millie, or are you trying to eat up the kitchen linoleum?

MIL.: It is a little tough, isn't it?

RON.: A little tough? You'd better change your butcher, old dear.

JUN.: They can't. It's the only place their credit's any good.

(Hubert groans and leans against the door frame.)

RON.: (Laughs loudly) Haw, haw, haw! That's a nifty.

OLIV.: Junior does say the most original things.

JUN.: Aw, that wasn't original. That's what Uncle Hubert told Aunt Millie this morning. I heard him.

MIL.: (Off R.) Why, Hubert, darling! When did you get home?

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HUB.: (Colorless, sly) A few minutes ago.

MIL.: (Appears quickly at the door.) We are waiting for you, precious. (She throws her arms about his neck and kisses him.)

HUB.: (Quietly) So I see. (There is general ad lib greeting from all.)

RON.: (Calls from off, boisterously) How's the wage slave tonight?

HUB.: If you mean me--I'm all right.

MRS.P.: (Enters) You look a little pale, Hubert.

MIL.: Come along, dearest. We've saved a piece of steak for you.

HUB.: Thanks. That's very nice--but--I'm not hungry.

MIL.: (Tugs at his hand) But, darling, you must eat something.

HUB.: (Very definitely) I'm not hungry. I don't want to eat.

MIL.: Don't you feel well, sweetheart?

HUB.: Oh--sure, I feel swell.

MIL.: Hubert, don't you story to me! You're sick! Oh yes you are! (Feels his face) You're feverish, Hubert. Let Millie see your tongue.

HUB.: My tongue's all right.

RON.: (In a loud, kidding voice) Go on, Hubie! Mind Mama! (Hubert sticks his tongue out, looking directly off R. toward Ronald as he does so) Atta boy, Hubie! Atta Boy!

MIL.: It looks all right to me.

HUB.: Millie--I want to talk to you--privately.

MIL.: (With a look of alarm) Why? Is anything the matter, Hubert?

HUB.: (Speaking off) Would you mind excusing us a moment? (They ad lib: "Oh, no!" "Certainly not." etc. Hubert closes door.)

MIL.: (Excitedly) Something is the matter! Oh--Hubert! You haven't been fired? (Hubert merely looks at her) Then you've had an accident. You've wrecked the car! (He continues to look at her) What is it then? Not--not another woman? (With a little squeak) Ooooooh, Hubert! I couldn't stand that! Hubert, don't tell me that someone has come between us!

HUB.: (Quietly) Yes, Millie--someone has come between us. Our little home is being broken up.

MIL.: B-b-broken up? Oooooh--Hubert!--I think I'm going to faint.

HUB.: No you're not! You're going to listen to what I have to say!

MIL.: (Meekly) All right, Hubert.

HUB.: Sit down (Indicates chair R.) over there!

MIL.: Yes, Hubert. (She crosses and sits)

HUB.: (Follows and stands for a moment as she dabs at her eyes with handkerchief) Millie--we've been married seven months now.

MIL.: Y-y-yes, Hubert. Seven months this coming T-T-Tuesday.

HUB.: (Earnestly) The first two months were heavenly, Millie. I was terribly in love with you--and--I--I--think you were in love with me.

MIL.: Why, Hubert! How can you say such a thing? You know very well--

HUB.: (Cuts her short) We didn't have much money--but we did have each other--and our little home and our car--and I was frightfully happy.

MIL.: (Tearfully) Oh, Hubert! You're breaking my heart.

HUB.: And then your relatives started dropping in and--

MIL.: (Suddenly sits erect) Why, Hubert! Surely you didn't object to--

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