

a script from



COLLECTIVE

SCRIPT

"Line, Please"

By
Dave Tippett

What

In this easy to stage, fun and inspiring skit, Ben is rehearsing to audition for a church play on relationships. His wife, Sally, is helping to feed him his lines, but get frustrated when he can't remember the script. As the skit unfolds, both parties find themselves trapped in their own interpretations of how the 'script' should sound. In the end, they realize the importance of respectful collaboration in creating a new story based on grace.

Themes: Love, Grace, Relationships, Couples

Who

Sally
Ben

When

Modern Times

Costumes

Contemporary clothing

Props

Chair
Nondescript paper, with pages attached together, to appear as a script

Why

1 Thessalonians 5:11

How

Simple stage. The chair is placed upstage, to the right (or left). The actual script could be written in the "prop" script for shorter rehearsal time or ease of use.

Time

5 minutes

Ben is at center stage, wringing his hands a bit. **Sally** is seated to the side, in the chair. She is holding what looks like a thin script and is looking down at it.

Ben: OK, OK, let me try this again. (*a bit of change in his voice as he is now 'acting' and his attention is focused out towards the audience and not at Sally for now*) Hello there, dearest wife. Um, er, how's it going? Good, good. Sooo... listen, I've been thinking. About that little disagreement we had the other day. You know, the one with the raised voices, gnashing of teeth and the like. Well, uh, I just wanted to say about all this is... is... (*frustrated, pause, then calling out*) line, please.

Sally: (*sighs, then reading off the script, imitating his voice*) I'm terribly sorry and I'll never ever, and I mean ever accuse my loving wife of forgetting to check the oil on the car, which should not be her job in the first place, and no engine repair should cost that much, and why didn't we get more estimates? (*she's done and looks up at him*) There.

Ben: (*to her*) Um, er, wow. Is that all really my next line?

Sally: (*matter of fact*) Yes.

Ben: (*skeptical*) Hmmm. I thought it was something like (*acting now, towards audience*) I know how, um, frustrating it all was, and I know you'll understand where I was coming from.

Sally: Whoa, way off. It's what I said (*to self*) Pretty much.

Ben: (*skeptical*) Uh huh.

Sally: Look, the script is written a certain way, and you'll just have to learn your lines. I'm just the prompter here. You know, your loving wife doing her duty. (*hint of sarcasm*) With joy.

Ben: (*not convinced*) Yeah. By the way, where did that script come from? I know I have to perform a short script to audition for the church play on relationships or whatever, but this script feels, um, familiar somehow.

Sally: (*feigning innocence*) Oh, I, uh, found it online somewhere. Maybe A.I. wrote it.

Ben: Well. OK... let me pick up from the car engine blowing up line. (*clears throat, acting*). So, yes, the engine blew up and I think we can fairly assess blame to both parties, and... and... ugh. Sorry. Line, please.

Sally: (*sighs, looking at script for a second, then looks up and recites as if she had memorized the next lines*) And my dear I appreciate how right you can be, like all the time, and what else can I apologize for? If you can make a list, that would be helpful.

Ben: (*looks back at her*) Wait, that doesn't sound like what my character would say.

Sally: (*interpreting and waving the script*) It's right here. The people holding the audition are going to want to hear it as written, line by line. Just saying.

Ben: (*pushing back*) But they might *also* like to see how an (*referring to himself*) actor can take what's written on the page and make it their own amazing interpretation that will bring the house down and leave them weeping and applauding in gratitude for such a fine performance!

Sally: (*sarcastic as well*) Performance is right. No, I think they'll want an honest take on the script, not something that feels like the character is wiggling out of taking responsibility for their actions.

Ben: Oh, I see, so when one character's motivation is questioned in a negative way, they are just supposed to accept it and not want to, I dunno know, take the script and do a total rewrite?

Sally: Huh?

Ben: Look, I just want-

Sally: (*interrupting, hard tone*) Just never mind! (*Ben is taken back a bit by her tone. Sally is as well, and lowers her voice but still with a tone*) Just do it how I.. I mean *it* was written. Is that too hard to ask?

Ben: (*looks at her for a beat, then smiles to himself*) You know, I also think there can be room for some inspired improvisation!

Sally: What? Wait, no no-

Ben: *(ignoring) Script revision! (now, like he's reading stage directions)* Man... that's me... walks downstage center and delivers a heartfelt speech.

Sally: *(throws up her hands, flat tone)* Great.

Ben: *(as his character, out to audience, dramatic)* It can be so hard sometimes to make a relationship truly work. Yes, there will be times when engines expire needlessly. Or when communication breaks down and true feelings have to be written out as a stage drama in the guise of something that *(finger air quotes)* "A.I. wrote". *(he stops and turns back and looks at her)*

Sally: I don't know what you are talking about. And there's no going off script. *(a bit softer tone)* Every, um, line is important.

Ben: *(comes back to her)* Yes, I agree... however, I think and hope there's always room for some improvisation. And when we say or do something that the other person has an issue with... when things don't go, um, as written... that some grace can be given, by both sides.

Sally: And sometimes giving grace over and over again can get tiring. *(quickly referring to the script again)* Especially when the script is not always... *(softer tone)* respected.

Ben: *(softly, admitting)* Yeah. *(pause)* You're right. *(longer pause, thinking, then)* Man stays downstage wondering what to do now. And a bit afraid to ask for their next line.

Sally: *(softer tone, slight smile)* I thought you were all about improv?

Ben: *(smiles)* Right, right. *(pauses, thinking, then)* The scene? A couple are auditioning for a play about relationships. They are madly in love *(looks back at the still seated Sally, with a smile)* Right? *(Sally looks down at first, then raises her head with a smile, nods)*. Whew. Anyway, they are trying to make their *(finger air quotes)* "script" work. Both are, at times, struggling with their lines *(Sally stays seated, looking down at script. Ben referring to himself)* Man moves upstage to Woman and holds out his hand, hoping it will be accepted. *(Ben moves to Sally and slowly holds out his hand in invitation. Sally slowly looks up, then looks at the script. She makes a decision. She takes Ben's hand and stands up and drops the script onto the chair. She then leads them back to center stage)*

Sally: *(like reading stage directions)* Woman... that's me... trusts Man... *(smiles)* pretty much. And says, *(acting now)* I've been working on a new script.

Ben: *(playing along)* Oh really?

Sally: Yes.

Ben: Can't wait to hear about it.

Sally: Well, honestly, it's a work in progress.

Ben: No A.I.?

Sally: No. All... all from the heart. It'll be easy to memorize.

Ben: *(with a smile)* Whew.

Sally: But if lines are forgotten-

Ben: *(a bit skeptical)* Yesss?

Sally: Grace... will answer.

Ben: *(acknowledging his role)* Along with respect.

Sally: And love.

Ben: The agape kind? Sacrificial and all?

Sally: *(smiles)* Way ahead of you.

Ben: I like this script.

Sally: Me too. *(pause, smiling)* Now, let's revisit your line about the car engine-

Ben: *(like reading stage directions again, pretending to panic)* Man remembers he has something really, really important to do and exits stage left or right or wherever he can.

Ben quickly looks around and then exits either stage left or right.

Sally: (she starts to follow him, but pauses, picks up the script and says, again, as if reading stage directions, and acts them out as she says them) Woman takes old script, looks at it, then places it back on the chair. She exits, already thinking of the better next act.

She exits and curtain.

PURCHASE
SCRIPT
TO
REMOVE
WATERMARK
AT
231WORSHIP.COM