

Husbands

by Sam McCrea

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A Play by Sam McCrea

Cast: 2 women any age between 30 and 50, two 10-year-old girls, one 12-year-old boy

Setting: Location is flexible (could be someone's home, a restaurant, outdoor café, etc.)

Furniture/props: Flexible. Can use 1 table, two chairs, and two coffee cups and actresses sit while chatting and drinking coffee. Alternatively, the actresses can stand mid-stage and chat, with or without coffee cups.

Play opens as lights come up with actresses already on stage. Children dart on and off stage as they play and sometimes stop to listen to parents and make funny facial expressions and body movements.

SUSAN: Well Zelda, how have you been?

ZELDA: You don't want to know!

SUSAN: That bad, huh?

ZELDA: Where do I start? You know that Friday a couple weeks ago when we had the big storm where first we got snow, then sleet, then the next morning the temperature got down to 1 or 2 or something like that?

SUSAN: Yes.

ZELDA: Well, I tried to wake my husband Saturday morning and get him to go out and shovel our parking spots before the stuff turned to hard ice and blocked us in until May! He said he'd get to it later and went back to sleep. Well "later" for him means next week, so I went out about 7 o'clock or so and started shoveling.

SUSAN: 7 o'clock on Saturday morning?

ZELDA: Yeah, and that stuff was heavy, not like that light, fluffy stuff we usually get. I had been working for about two hours cleaning off cars, the sidewalk in front of our house, and the space around one of the cars before that bum of a husband of mine comes out of the house, hops in the car, and says he's going to Barstucks to get coffee and did I want him to bring me a cup!

SUSAN: You're kidding. You mean he didn't even offer to finish shoveling?

ZELDA: No! I would have killed him if it hadn't been for so many witnesses who were shoveling themselves. My next door neighbor, Jennie, had a similar situation with her husband. As the two of us continued breaking our backs shoveling, she turned to me and said "What's wrong with this picture?" I said back to her "It's that hunter/gatherer thing where the men leave the women behind to do anything that resembles work while they gallivant all over the countryside looking for some food to kill!"

SUSAN: I thought only my husband was like that!

COURTNEY: Mom, can I have some coffee?

SUSAN: No, Sweetie. Caffeine is bad for you.

COURTNEY: But, Daddy lets me drink some of his coffee.

SUSAN: Daddy just doesn't know any better,
Sweetie. He's still growing up.

ZELDA: I tell you, Susan, husbands are all the same. At those poker games they pretend to have on Saturday nights they just sit around and drink beer by the case! They try to figure out in advance what may pop up that requires any work and then they figure out a way to get the women to do it while they pretend they have to go to the hardware store and get nails or something!

SUSAN: Yeah, one time I asked Zeb to fix a toilet in the house and he said he needed to go buy a part for it before he could fix it. He was gone for 4 hours! When he came home he had the nerve to tell me he couldn't find the part he needed at any of the stores he went to so he'd have to try again tomorrow! I finally found out from Ellen that he'd been playing golf with her husband during that 4-hour disappearance!

ZELDA: What a hoot men are. For years I tried to get Jim to share the cooking. This is how that worked. One Monday night I'd whipped up a meal of steak, tossed salad, two veggies, and dessert with coffee. The next day was Jim's turn to cook and he came home and said "Hey, Snookums let's go out to eat tonight. We haven't been out to eat in ages." When we had just gone out to eat 2 nights before when it was Jim's turn to cook!

SUSAN: I feel your pain! When Zeb and I first got married I tried to get him to help out with the laundry. On one attempt Zeb had put a load of clothes into the washer, but forgot to start the washer. He came back 30 minutes later and thought that the clothes had finished washing and he threw them in the dryer. On

another attempt he washed his red T-shirt with a load of whites and the whites came out pink. Another time he ruined one of my dresses by washing it in hot water and he had the nerve to tell me that I should shop at upscale stores and buy dresses that could stand a little hot water!

ZELDA: Do you think he messed up the wash on purpose so that he could get out of doing laundry?

SUSAN: I don't think he's that smart. But, I got tired of having my clothes ruined so I told him to stay away from the washer and dryer!

ALEC: Mom, I'm bored. Can I go start the car and listen to the radio?

ZELDA: Not until you're 16.

ALEC: But, Mom, I'll be an old man by then.

ZELDA: Then I'll get you a wheelchair with a radio on it.

ZELDA: Speaking of cars, men think they're good at working on cars. Well, maybe some men, but don't turn my husband loose on a car. We had a flat tire once and since we have Triple A service I suggested to Jim that we should just call them and let them change it. Jim pouted and moped around for a few minutes, so finally I said "Oh, alright, go ahead and change it." So he grabbed the jack out of the trunk and started jacking the car up. But, he had forgotten to put the emergency brake on so the car started sliding off the jack. As the car slid in one direction, the jack tilted in the other direction and poked a hole in the gas tank. Gas started spilling out. Jim began to panic and dropped the lug wrench. As the lug wrench fell it struck the side of the car creating a spark that ignited the gas. At the sight of the flames we both bolted for a ditch

nearly and dove in just before the gas tank exploded! As we watched our car go up in smoke and flames Jim said, "Did you remember to pay the car insurance?"

SUSAN: Speaking of bills, Zeb can really run them up. Men accuse women of being big spenders, but nobody can blow money as quickly as Zeb. He bought a pair of three-foot-long bolt cutters once. I said "Zeb, what on Earth are you going to use those for?" He said "You never know when someone might lock themselves out of the house and lose the key." I said "We don't have a padlock on the house. What good would bolt cutters do?" And he said "Well, I could always use them to break a window and get in." I said "Why don't you use them to perform brain surgery on yourself!".

Another time he bought a riding lawnmower. We live in a townhouse. Our yard is about the size of a postage stamp. He tried to justify it by saying there may come a time when both our cars would be broken down at once and there would be a terrible blizzard and the only way we could get out to get food would be on the riding lawnmower!

ZELDA: Yeah, Jim bought one of those, too. He used it twice and now he pays a couple of neighborhood kids to cut the grass. He says he's doing a good deed by helping them save up for college. I said "Why didn't you just give them the money you blew on the lawnmower and then they could both go to Harvard!"

ALLISON: Mom, I'm tired. Can we go home now?

ZELDA: In a little while, Dear. Run play with Courtney and Alec.

ALLISON: Aw, playing is no fun.

SUSAN: Another thing that Zeb does that drives me crazy is he cruises around the neighborhood the night before trash pickup and brings home all kinds of stuff that other people have sensibly thrown away. He brought home 3 broken bicycles once. Since we already had working bicycles I asked him what he was going to do with the 3 broken ones. He said he was going to fix them up and sell them. They sat in the back yard for six months and he never touched them. Then late one night when he thought I was asleep I looked out the window and saw him taking the bikes out for trash pickup the next day!

ZELDA: Jim never lets me throw anything away. He always says he's going to fix it. We have three broken VCR's, two broken microwaves, and a broken TV in our utility room. I said "Jim, you know we have a DVD player now. You don't have to worry about fixing the VCR's." He said "Yeah, but then what would we do with our seventy-three VHS cassettes?" I said "We could store them in the two broken microwaves."

He did try to fix our kitchen table one time. It wobbled only slightly and didn't really bother me, but Jim decided he was going to fix it. He went out and bought a brand new electric saw for the job. He said the old saw's blades were too dull. I thought to myself wouldn't it have been cheaper to just buy new saw blades, but it was the first time in ages that he'd tried to repair something so I didn't want to dampen his enthusiasm. He spent a good bit of time measuring the table legs and marking off spots with a pencil. Then he sawed off parts of three legs -- the table's legs that is. He proudly put the table upright and realized that it was the fourth leg that was too long rather than the three he'd sawed. So then he sawed off part of the fourth leg. Yep, you guessed it, he sawed off too much and now the other three legs were longer. He gave it one more try, but when he discovered that the table wobbled even more than before and that we now had to reach way down from our lofty perches on the kitchen chairs to get to our plates he said "You

know, Hon, I never liked that table anyway. I'll get you a new one for your birthday!".

SUSAN: But, all seriousness aside, husbands do try. They're so cute when they try to please us. When they serve us breakfast in bed on our anniversaries and bring us burned toast and an omelet with parts of the egg shell cooked inside; when they take us out for a romantic evening to a hockey game; and when they let us hold the TV remote during commercials.

Well, it's been great chatting with you, but I've got to get back. I've got to chop some wood, change the oil in the car, and patch a leak in the roof.

ZELDA: Yes, I've got to get on home, too. It's Jim's turn to cook tonight so I've got to get dressed for the restaurant he'll be taking me to.

SUSAN: Husbands! You can't live with them and.....you can't live with them!!!

Blackout while actresses still on stage

