



drama by george

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The Truth Hurts

By George Halitzka

(A cheerful domestic scene. STACI is chopping vegetables on an island-counter in the kitchen. Her son DILLON, age 9 or thereabouts, is writhing impatiently on a wooden stool and brandishing a plastic sword.)

STACI

Are you done with Reading?

DILLON

Yeah.

STACI

The questions, too?

DILLON

Yeah, Mom!

STACI

How's your memory verse? Church is tonight.

DILLON

(with less certainty)

Good.

STACI

(picking up a card from the counter to check his knowledge)

Let's hear it. "For the word of God" . . .

DILLON

I know that part!

(reciting)

"For the word of God is living sharper than any sword"--

STACI

Double-edged sword--

DILLON

Can I have a yogurt?

STACI

After your verse. "Sharper than any doubled-edged sword"--

DILLON

Is that the "joints and marbles" part?

STACI

"Joints and marrow." Go study.

DILLON

I know it! "Joints and marbles, it judges the attitudes of the heart"--

STACI

You have work to do, Mister.

DILLON

(obstinately)

I want a yogurt first.

STACI

And I want my wooden spoon.

(The wooden spoon is the rod of correction in this house. A heavy sigh from DILLON. He stands and starts to exit. A door shuts off.)

DAN

(off; a la Ricky Ricardo)

Luuucy, I'm home!

(DILLON has scrambled to hide behind the kitchen doorway.)

DILLON

(stage whisper)

Shh! I'm gonna scare Dad!

(DILLON hides by the doorway of the kitchen, sword at the ready. DAN enters and crosses to the kitchen. As he comes into the room, DILLON jumps out of hiding.)

DILLON

BOO!

DAN
Hey, Buddy!

DILLON
Did I scare you?

DAN
Don't let your sword stick out. Know what's on tonight?

DILLON
Wrestlemania!

DAN
Stone Cold's coming out of retirement!

DILLON
Can we make our own ring? With the cushions and stuff?

DAN
(looking at STACI)
That's up to your mother.

DILLON
We won't break anything--promise!

STACI
(coolly)
What about church?

DILLON
We'll miss wrestling! Can I stay home with Dad?

(DAN glances at STACI. She returns "The Look.")

DAN
Better go; don't wanna make Jesus mad-

STACI
Dan!

DILLON
Guess my wrestler name.

DAN
(looking at STACI)
"Church-Man"?

DILLON

"The Gladiator"! I'll show you my move. With the sword.

STACI

Dillon, can you work on your verse in the living room?

DILLON

Can I practice my move?

STACI

(simultaneously with DAN)

No.

DAN

(simultaneously with STACI)

Sure.

STACI

Work on your verse, Dill.

DILLON

But Dad said--

DAN

Learn the verse, then show me your move.

DILLON

That's not fair.

(starting to exit--to DAN)

Can I have a yogurt?

DAN

Yeah.

(STACI shoots DAN a dirty look as DILLON triumphantly snatches a yogurt out of the fridge. DAN shrugs--"I didn't know." DILLON exits.)

The Gladiator exits the ring, leaving his defeated opponent . . . "Doghouse Man."

STACI

Dan, you know Wednesday's church--

DAN

Where I come from, it's Sunday.

STACI

Where you come from, you don't go.

DAN

Pot calling the kettle, Staci. This your latest kick? Last year PTA--

STACI

Jesus changed me--

DAN

That what they tell you after you drink the grape juice?

(No response. STACI returns to chopping vegetables--rather vigorously.)

I know it's good for Dillon; I was in Boy Scouts. But memorizing Bible verses? That's . . . brainwashing, huh?

STACI

Right up there with Wrestlemania.

DAN

Huh?

STACI

What do you call WWE?

DAN

Um, *entertainment*? We watch it on TV--

STACI

He's running around doing "moves"--

DAN

He's *playing*; kids do that--

STACI

--As "The Gladiator." But church--

DAN

Never mind, Staci.

STACI

When you see him pretending to be Jesus, let me know.

DAN
Mom's got that market cornered.

STACI
Can't you believe I'm *different*?

DAN
'Cause you're away from home three times a week?

STACI
Nobody stops you coming--

DAN
I gotta get dunked, too?

STACI
You don't "gotta" do anything.

DAN
But what do you want, Staci? You want me to come with you?

STACI
No, I--

DAN
Pray some prayer? I did that once--

STACI
(sighing)
Dan . . . I want you to give it a chance.

(DILLON tries to sneak into the room with his sword. STACI sees him.)

Why aren't you studying, young man?

DILLON
I *know* it. Can I get out the cushions, Dad?

STACI
Go study. *Now*.

DILLON
(to DAN)
You said I could show you my move.

DAN

You heard your mother.

DILLON

That's not fair! Church is *boring*--

STACI

One . . . two . . .

DILLON

(starting to exit)

Stupid church.

DAN

Is this what you're going for? He's nine and he hates it already.

STACI

If you weren't going on about wrestling--

DAN

It's a weekly battle! I watch you drag him--

STACI

Maybe if his father would set an example--

DAN

Providing for my family; that's not enough?

(Pause.)

Stace . . . why don't we talk about this tomorrow?

(STACI sighs and goes back to work on her vegetables.)

Y'know, Dill's always tired after wrestling. I could put him to bed.

(Nothing.)

I haven't seen my wild woman in a while--

STACI

I think we need to *talk*. After church.

DAN

It's been a long day . . .

STACI

Headaches aren't allowed, but *your* long--

DAN

Staci--

STACI

It's easier to be like Stone Cold than Jesus.

(Pause.)

DAN

Fine. Fine. I can be like Jesus. 'Course, you'll have to go back to work, 'cause I won't be meeting quota anymore.

STACI

Dan, you can be honest--

DAN

Not in this business. Better return the Rendezvous; you know how we got our tax refund.

STACI

I still feel terrible.

DAN

Feelings don't pay back three grand. Or that bonus I used--

STACI

But it's *done*--

DAN

Don't buy Dill school clothes; Jesus wouldn't support sweatshops.

STACI

We can't stop *living*--

DAN

And Kim Cummings. Don't talk about her anymore; she's God's child.

STACI

I don't say *anything*--

DAN

Ah-ah, you know where liars go, Stace.

STACI
(uncertainly)
Christians aren't perfect--just forgiven.

DAN
(laughing)
You want this to be real, you better step outta the ring.

STACI
I . . . just want Dillon to--learn . . .
(Pause.)
Can we talk about this tomorrow? I need to finish dinner--

DAN
Sure. Don't wanna make a bad impression on your church friends.

STACI
That's not what I--

DAN
When you wanna talk, you let me know.

(DILLON has snuck back into the kitchen.
Suddenly, he lets out a yell and charges.)

DILLON
Watch, Dad--the Gladiator!

STACI
(moving in front of him)
Dillon Thomas, you get back in--

(The sword, which was directed at the island
counter, accidentally strikes STACI in the gut.
She doubles over in pain.)

DAN
Dillon! Stace, are you all right?

DILLON
Mommy, I didn't mean to--

DAN
Get in your room, boy!

I'm sorry--

DILLON

Sorry won't cut it. Go!

DAN

But wrestling--

DILLON

GO!

DAN

(DILLON, pouting, exits the room.)

Are you okay?

STACI

Yeah . . .

DAN

Do you need to sit?

STACI

I'm fine--

DAN

If he ever thinks he's watching--

STACI

He was playing--

DAN

Playing, my butt!

STACI

Dan . . .

DAN

Do you need--

STACI

No, I'm fine--

DAN
(sympathetically)
But it hurts, huh?

STACI
Yeah . . . sometimes the truth does that, Dan.

(STACI meets DAN'S eyes, thoughtfully.
Blackout.)

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