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Satire

Paulette Carroll

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Satire

Abstract

No abstract provided.

~ Satire ~
by

Paulette
Carroll



Place: The living-room of an apartment in the Eleanor building, with a couch and several chairs.
Time: The day after Saloon.

(When the curtain rises, Paulette is alone on the couch, drinking cider, eating potato chips, and reading a book. Enters Dick-the-teacher.)

Dick-the-teacher: Is anyone else coming to-night?
Paulette: Shh...I haven't finished Phantastes.
Dick-the-teacher: O.K....I'll count on you for the discussion. I haven't prepared anything.
Paulette: I know.

(There is a long silence. Dick sits down and seems lost in meditation. After a while he sighs and exits to the kitchen.)

Dick's anguished voice, from the kitchen: My cider!
Paulette: Yes, it's very good. A bit expensive, though. You should buy it at the supermarket near my home.
Dick's voice: Well, I might as well have a nice glass of water.

(He reappears with a paper cup which he holds very awkwardly, trying unsuccessfully to separate the handle from the cup.)

Dick: Paulette?
Paulette (Paying no attention to him): This book is boring.
Jared (Suddenly bursting through the door): I quite agree. (Dick spills his water all over himself.) We should have read That Hideous Strength instead.
Paulette (looking at Dick): Aren't you glad now I drank your cider?
Jared: I think that in Phantastes, the struggle of Good against Evil in the framework of the author's Episcopalian...
Paulette: How do you know he was an Episcopalian?
Jared: Well, I have here (pulling a piece of paper out of his briefcase) a letter from Jenifer Conley.
Paulette: Jenifer Conley?
Jared (very condescendingly): The granddaughter of his cleaning woman, of course. I once even had a friend whose cousin lived next door to...
Dick: Shouldn't we wait till the others are here?
Jared: Who else is going to come? (Dick acknowledges the blow.)
Paulette (to his defense): Well, I know Bill plans to come...
Dick (With a bright smile, after a glance at his watch): It's only 8:00 p.m.! The class is not supposed to start before 7:30, you know...
Paulette: I hear footsteps!
Dick: Oh, my God! (He rushes to the door.) Hello, Andrea! (Andrea enters, walks straight to the couch and opens a book. She does not say a word all evening and very rarely looks at anyone. Short



silence.)
 Dick: I think someone else is coming. It's probably Bill.
 Paulette (looking at her watch): I doubt it.
 Dick: My goodness, a whole crowd! (Enter Julie, Jerry, Carol, and a small fraction each of Rick, Bob, and Jim. The latter 1.08 persons walk to stage front and address the audience in chorus.)
 Rick, Bob, and Jim: Forgive us, dear audience, for being only partly here, but this is supposed to be symbolic. The author of this tragedy is trying to portray an average class, and our attendance has been rather sporadic. It would not have been fair to leave us out, especially since this piece is supposed to be read at a party at which we might well be present, in our entirety, and we might feel offended if we are the only ones not to be satirized. If we won't say much during the remainder of the play, it is merely because the author doesn't know much about us. We wisely kept our distance. (They take their seats.)
 Jared: We should have read That Hideous Strength instead. (Silence)
 Dick (to Paulette): Are you sure that Bill is coming?
 Julie: Yes, isn't it getting a little late, even for him?
 Jared: I hope he hasn't had an accidental goodness.
 Dick: I hear footsteps! (He rushes to the door. Enters Bill. Paulette immediately reaches for a cigarette.)
 Julie: Would you like a light?
 Paulette (shocked): What kind of girl do you think I am?
 Bill (self-consciously): Hi, everybody! (He lights Paulette's cigarette.)
 Dick: What happened to you, Bill?
 Bill: Well, I was half an hour late to start with...
 Dick: Get to the point, will you?
 Bill: I had forgotten that we were no longer meeting in Van Vleck.
 Dick: But we changed two months ago!
 Bill (sheepishly): I know...
 Dick: I can't understand how people can be so absent-minded.
 Jerry: I was late because I thought we were meeting in Dick's room.
 Dick: What gave you that silly notion?
 Jerry: You told me so on the phone this afternoon.
 Dick: Oh, really? Well, anybody can make a mistake.
 Bill (to Paulette, aside): Have you noticed how much self-confidence Dick has gained from constantly having to fight Jared in this course?
 Paulette (idem): I think it's mainly having just been elected president for another year.
 Carol: What are we discussing tonight?
 Dick: Phantastes.
 Julie: I'll have to read that some day.
 Paulette: Oh, here, Bill, you can have your Phantastes back.
 Bill: Must you return it so soon?
 Paulette: It breaks my heart. Sorry about that grease mark. It's oil and vinegar dressing. I mistook that page for an artichoke leaf today at lunch. Shall I buy you another...
 Bill: No, no, don't do that. A little oil never hurt. Besides I'm sure Julie wants to borrow it. (He hastily gives it to her.)
 Dick: Well, Phantastes was written in...
 Jared: I'd rather talk about Malory. (He produces a letter from his briefcase.) You know, it's hard to get a letter from Malory these days. He doesn't answer his mail anymore.
 Paulette: Don't try to make excuses. He just doesn't answer your letters.
 Jared (ignoring her): But I have here a personal letter from Christopher Malory, his descendant...
 Bill: In which he explains that Malory's work is based on Episcopalian theology?
 Dick: Phantastes was written in...
 Jared: What have you got against Episcopalian theology?
 Dick: Jared, please!
 Jared: I know nobody here loves me because I am a Christian. (He sulks.)
 Jerry: I'd like to talk more about The Once and Future King.
 Julie: That's a good idea. I haven't read any of that other stuff.
 Jared: I disagree. We should have read That Hideous Strength instead. But as long as we're going to discuss White, let me say in one sentence the final truth about his book. Arthur's tragedy is that he had to burn Guenevere for adultery.
 Jerry: Why did he have to burn her?
 Jared: Because it was the law.
 Carol: Who made the law?
 Jared: Arthur.
 Paulette: Why?
 Jared: Because adultery is wrong.
 Julie: Why is adultery wrong?
 Jared: That's Episcopalian theology. We can't question it.
 Dick: What about White's point of view on the subject?
 Jared: I'm afraid that if pushed into a corner, he would have to admit that he agrees with me.
 Bill: I don't doubt it, Jared. You are a hard pusher.
 Jared: In fact there is plenty of evidence on my side. The cousin of White's gardener...
 Dick (with sudden determination): Phantastes was written in... (his voice is drowned by a sudden shout from the crowd in the street. Tear gas starts infiltrating the room. Everyone starts coughing and sniffing. Andrea almost says something.)
 Bill (sniffing): I brought some vinegar with me. Here, help yourselves!
 Jared: I need something more potent. How about writing a satire of this class, Paulette?

THE END

