

TITLE:

CLOTHESLINE

10:00 COMEDY

SYNOPSIS:

Clothesline – sounds simple, doesn't it? But what a wife has in mind when she says "clothesline" and what a husband has in mind may be the difference between sleeping in marital bliss and sleeping in the doghouse.

CHARACTERS

Husband

Wife

PROPS:

Picnic table

Two lawn chairs

Clothes line rope

Tray with 2 plastic iced tea tumblers

Large stack of women's magazines with post-it notes.

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AT RISE.

HUSBAND SITS IN LAWN CHAIR BESIDE TABLE AS WIFE APPROACHES. ON THE TABLE IS A PACKAGE OF COTTON CLOTHES LINE ROPE. (FOR USE LATER.)

WIFE:

(in a hurry)

Honey... are you busy?

HUSBAND:

Not particularly. I'm going to mow the lawn in a few minutes.

WIFE:

I've decided that we should do our part to reduce our carbon footprint... so I'd like to put up a clothes line.

HUSBAND:

Clothes line? Okay. That sounds good.

WIFE:

I'll be out running some errands, okay?

HUSBAND:

Okay.

QUICK PECK ON THE CHEEK AND WIFE EXITS.

HUSBAND: (CONT'D)

(standing)

It sounds simple, doesn't it? It always does. Clothes line. But, what a husband has in mind when his wife says "clothes line" and what his wife has in mind, may be the difference between sleeping in marital bliss and sleeping on the sofa.

(a beat)

Can't get much simpler than
"clothes line." Two posts. One
line. Clothes line.

PANTOMIME

HUSBAND: (CONT'D)

What a simple project. I went to
the home center, got a coupla
posts, a coupla horizontal cross
members - they even make a clothes
line brace for the cross-members, a
coupla bags of concrete, and
(picking up rope
from table)
clothes line rope!

HUSBAND: (CONT'D)

(walking cross
stage)

A very simple "honey do" project
for a guy like me. So, I picked the
sunniest spot so the clothes would
dry quickly.

PANTOMIME

HUSBAND: (CONT'D)

Measured it out. Stepped it off.
Dug the holes. Planted the posts.
Made sure they were per-pin-
dicular... want 'em to look nice in
our back yard! Cemented 'em in. Put
on the cross-members and was
sitting back admiring the simple,
clean linearity of it all when my
beloved returned from her errands.

WIFE APPROACHES AT A FAST PACE CARRYING A TRAY WITH ICED
TEA GLASSES.

WIFE:

(concerned)

Honey...!

WIFE HANDS HUSBAND A GLASS OF ICED TEA.

HUSBAND:

(proudly)

Hi! How do you like the clothes
line?

GESTURING WITH HER ICED TEA GLASS. THEY SIP ICED TEA.

WIFE:

(walking to the
spot)

Oh, honey... why'd you put it HERE?

HUSBAND:

Oh, geez... I dunno? Sunshine?

WIFE:

But, hon-ey... the neighbors can
see it HERE. I don't want the
neighbors to see my panties or your
underwear blowing in the breeze!

HUSBAND:

But, it's a clothes line!

WIFE:

But, why didn't you ask me where I
wanted the clothes line?

HUSBAND:

Ask you? Why? It's a simple
decision. A clothes line requires
sunshine! I know where the sun
shines... so I got the posts, the
cross-members, the concrete and
(gesturing with
rope)
the rope! Clothes line!

WIFE:

But, there are always things to
consider. There are options.
(pointing)

I think it ought to be more over
THERE.

HUSBAND walks over THERE and looks around. Then he walks
over HERE.

HUSBAND:
I think there's more space HERE.

WIFE:
(like he's an idiot)
Oh, hon-ey, it's wide open here,
sure!
(gesturing)
But, when you consider the fence
line, the roof line, the trees, the
shrubs, the plantings, the flower
beds, the patio... over THERE is
much better!
(pitifully)
And, it doesn't have to be just
two, un-beautiful posts!

HUSBAND:
You gotta admit - it's simple and
elegant.

WIFE walks over THERE and GESTURES WITH HER ICED TEA GLASS.

WIFE:
Oh, Hon-ey...!

WIFE FREEZES. HUSBAND WALKS TO HER AND ADDRESSES THE
AUDIENCE.

HUSBAND:
This reminds me that in the hands
of my wife, a glass of iced tea is
more than a glass of iced tea.
(admiring and
walking around her)
We were just married and my wife
asked "what is your favorite dish"?
Well, I said, Salmon Croquettes.
So, my dear wife called my mother

and got her recipe for Salmon Croquettes. She made those Salmon Croquettes for one of our first meals as a married couple. She asked me the simple question, "Well, how do you like the Salmon Croquettes." And I simply said, "My mother never put onion in her Salmon Croquettes." The next thing I knew, my wife dumped the tumbler of iced tea on me.

HUSBAND WALKS BACK TO STARTING POINT AND TAKES SAME POSITION BEFORE FREEZE.

HUSBAND:

I ate each and every one of those Salmon Croquettes.

WIFE UN-FREEZES. HUSBAND PUTS HIS HANDS IN HIS BACK POCKETS, ROCKS BACK SLIGHTLY AND FREEZES.

WIFE:

Did you hear what he said!? Simple and elegant? I've heard that phrase before... Simple and elegant. That's code for a lack of ability to do anything else. Sometimes he is the most thick-headed man I've ever met.

WIFE CROSSES TO HUSBAND, SHAKING HER HEAD IN A PITTYING FASHION.

(pointing things out
to audience)

Aw, but, you gotta admit, he's cute! Look at the gesture he's assumed. This is the gesture he always assumes. Hands in his back pockets. You think he's protecting his buns?

Well, he'd better protect his buns
for doing something so stupid as to
planting two 8-foot posts in
concrete in the middle of my back
yard!

WIFE WALKS BACK TO STARTING POINT. HUSBAND UN-FREEZES.

WIFE: (CONT'D)

Honey? May I show you a clothes
line?

HUSBAND:

Be my guest.

WIFE stalks off stage at a brisk pace and returns at an
equally fast pace with a giant stack of magazines and books
loaded with post-it notes. She drops the magazines and
books on the table with a loud "thud".

WIFE:

(flipping through
top magazine)

Here, dear... here's what a real
clothes line looks like.

(a beat)

The clothes lines of Paris. How
romantic is that? Paris...! France.
Look...! Look...! Monmart! Clothes
lines in Monmart!

(a beat)

When will I ever get to Paris?

(a beat)

Never. Could I have a clothes line
like they have in Paris?

(a beat)

No! You've got to have two posts
stuck in the middle of your yard!
Look at the couples in the photo...
why, you can just tell what a
clothes line has meant to their
relationship!

ANOTHER MAGAZINE

WIFE: (CONT'D)

(with emphasis)

Clothes lines in the Bahamas.
Bahamas! White sands. Bright sun.
Blue, blue water... Will I ever get
to see the Bahamas? Ummm? I doubt
it. But, my undies could be
flappin' in the breeze in our back
yard on something that looks like
it belongs right next door to that
beautiful, beautiful beach!

(looks at clothes
line location)

Sheesh!

(shakes her head)

ANOTHER MAGAZINE

WIFE: (CONT'D)

Antique, Victorian clothes lines.
Look at the lace on that, will you?
You can almost smell the rose
water! Not some stupid post and
concrete! Geez!

ANOTHER MAGAZINE

WIFE: (CONT'D)

Clothes lines of the Vatican.
Plain but reverent and oh, so
inspirational! Is our clothes line
inspirational?

A PAMPHLET

WIFE: (CONT'D)

Here's a pamphlet on the
spirituality of clothes lines. The
Feng Shui of clothes lines!

PICKING UP THICK BOOK

WIFE: (CONT'D)

I've even specially ordered the
Bible on Clothes lines... "More

Creative Clothes Lines:
Expandable, Collapsible, Multi-
Function"... and it even says right
on the cover, "step-by-step
photographs for professional
looking results every time!"
(a beat)
Professional looking results!

PUTTING BOOK DOWN

WIFE: (CONT'D)
Now do you understand at least a
little bit about what a clothes
line can truly mean to the quality
of our lives... and the
environment?

HUSBAND ROCKS BACK AND FORTH WITH HANDS IN POCKETS. WIFE
REACHES OVER AND PICKS UP COTTON ROPE.

WIFE: (CONT'D)
(with a pitying
look)
Cotton rope?
(long pause)
You're going to hang our clothes on
cotton rope?

HUSBAND:
Well... it sounds like this clothes
line is real important to you and
you've put a lot of thought into
it...

WIFE:
No shit, Sherlock! What were you
thinking?

HUSBAND:
I was thinking you could take the
cotton rope and tie me to the post
of your choice and then burn me
like Joan of Arc.

WIFE:

That would be a waste of good rope.
And, that would not reduce our
carbon footprint.

HUSBAND:

Okay... I'll just turn 'em into
bird feeders.

(a beat)

Where would you like to put the
clothes line?

WIFE:

I'm so glad you asked!

BLACKOUT.