

# DIFFERENT TIMES

By Carl L. Williams

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-876-1

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**PUBLISHED BY BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS**

**1-888-473-8521**

## DIFFERENT TIMES

*A Ten Minute Comedy Skit*

**By Carl L. Williams**

**SYNOPSIS:** A woman working at home on her computer becomes frustrated with all the email spam and telemarketer calls. Longing for the time, back in her mother's day, when people didn't have to contend with such things, she suddenly finds herself beset by door-to-door sales people. She awakens to a new appreciation for the modern age.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2 females, 2 males)*

- MELISSA (f) ..... A young woman working at home on her computer.  
*(30 lines)*
- HAROLD (m) ..... A vacuum cleaner salesman.  
*(23 lines)*
- JANET (f) ..... An encyclopedia saleswoman.  
*(18 lines)*
- LESTER (m) ..... A Fuller Brush Man salesman.  
*(11 lines)*

**SET:** Melissa's living room with a table, chair and front door.

**TIME:** Present.

### COSTUMES

HAROLD – Suit and Tie.

JANET – Conservatively dressed and carrying a satchel.

LESTER – Dressed nicely but a little downscale.

MELISSA – Everyday wear.

**PROPS**

- Laptop Computer
- Cellphone
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Encyclopedia Volume
- Broom and Brushes

**SOUND EFFECTS**

- Cell Phone Ring Tone
- Doorbell

**PRODUCTION NOTE**

At the conclusion of the play, it should be clear that Melissa had been dreaming.

**AT RISE:** *MELISSA sits at a table glaring at her laptop, with a cell phone beside her.*

**MELISSA:** *(Frustrated, angry.)* What is it with all this spam! Where does it all come from and why are they sending it to me?! Nigeria? Again? Really?

*SFX: Her cell phone rings and she answers.*

Hello? .....What? Wait—I said wait a minute! No, I don't need any more insurance, and I insist you put my number on your do-not-call list! Goodbye! *(Hangs up, exhausted and weary.)* Oh, man. Why does it have to be this way? It wasn't like this for my mother. She never had to put up with these things way back then. I'm so tired of it. *(Rests her head down on her folded arms on the table.)* Just so very tired.

*A long moment, then SFX: the doorbell rings. MELISSA rouses and opens the door. HAROLD, dressed in a suit and tie and carrying a vacuum cleaner, barges in with a big cheery smile and a lot of fast-talking energy.*

**HAROLD:** Hello, madam! My name is Harold and I'm here to do you a tremendous favor!

**MELISSA:** What are you—

**HAROLD:** Yes, indeed, a fine little homemaker like yourself can certainly use a practical machine like this one!

**MELISSA:** A vacuum cleaner—?

**HAROLD:** More than just a vacuum cleaner! I'm sure you have "just" a vacuum cleaner. But this dandy device will suck up dirt faster than you can lay it down!

**MELISSA:** I don't have dirt!

**HAROLD:** Of course you don't! I can tell you keep a tidy house. But think how long it takes you to keep it that way! You'll cut your cleaning time in half with this efficient new machine, attachments included, except for just a few and we can talk about those later.

**MELISSA:** Stop it! Stop! Are you insane?

**HAROLD:** Why, no ma'am. I'm your friendly neighborhood representative, going door to door, introducing myself and my product to all you lovely ladies.

**MELISSA:** Listen, you—

*SFX: The doorbell rings.*

Hold on.

*She opens the door and in comes JANET, conservatively dressed and carrying a satchel.*

**JANET:** Good morning, good morning!

**MELISSA:** No, it's not!

**JANET:** It is now! Because I'm bringing the whole wide world right into your home today.

**MELISSA:** What are you talking about?

**HAROLD:** The attached cord is an ideal length to let you maneuver around furniture, though of course we can furnish you an extension at little extra cost.

**JANET:** *(Pulls an encyclopedia volume from her satchel.)* Yes, you'll find the whole world contained in our multi-volume set of encyclopedias!

**MELISSA:** Encyclo—!

**JANET:** *(Jumping in and finishing for her.)* Pedias! Yes! 24 of them in a set, and this one's just a sample! I'm Janet, by the way.

**MELISSA:** And I'm confused.

**HAROLD:** Yes, indeed. This little beauty is one of those can't-do-without-it appliances for every modern housewife.

**MELISSA:** I'm not married!

**HAROLD:** Nothing attracts a husband like a clean-looking house!

**JANET:** Knowledge! They say knowledge is power, and they're right! This premium set of encyclopedias will provide a wealth of education for you and your children.

**MELISSA:** I don't have any children!

**JANET:** It's never too soon to plan ahead. Like Johnny Appleseed, I'm spreading seeds of knowledge from house to house and watching trees of knowledge sprout along the way.

**HAROLD:** Look, Janet, why don't you go spread your seeds someplace else? I got here first. *(To MELISSA.)* I've heard it said that nature hates a vacuum, but everyone loves a vacuum cleaner, and you'll certainly love this one!

**JANET:** Not as much as you'll love reading about everything from aardvarks to zebras.

**MELISSA:** Will you both stop talking!

**HAROLD:** No one can stop talking about this fabulous new machine. It's a lovely time-saver just made for a lovely lady like yourself.

**JANET:** The vacuum's not the only one sucking up.

**HAROLD:** Hey!

**JANET:** *(Shows the volume to MELISSA.)* Exquisite care went into crafting these beautiful volumes. Just look at the first-class binding and elegant embossing.

**HAROLD:** Don't let her "emboss" you around.

**JANET:** Is that supposed to be funny?

**HAROLD:** It's called humor. If that's the H volume, you can look it up.

**MELISSA:** I don't want any encyclopedias and I don't want any vacuum cleaners!

**HAROLD:** It's just the one.

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