

CHARACTERS: Sylvia
Professor Wayback
Martin Luther
Johann Tetzl
John Newton
Angel

(Enter Sylvia, with paddle -- she thinks of a sin, then gives herself a whack.)

(Angel comes in and observes -- shakes head, thinks ... has idea.)

SYLVIA: O.K., yeah -- I lied to my mom (whack, wince), and I yelled at my brother (whack, wince), and I was chewing gum in chapel (whack, wince).
(spits out gum)

(Enter Professor Wayback -- confused) (*FROM TIME MACHINE*)

PROFESSOR: What am I doing here? And who is that silly girl beating herself up?

(Angel looks in, giggles, and gives "thumbs-up" to the audience.)

PROFESSOR: Excuse me young lady, *MY NAME IS PROFESSOR WAYBACK WHAT IS YOUR NAME AND* ~~but~~ why do you whack yourself so?

SYLVIA: I must pay for my sins. (thinking) Oh, I kicked my dog (whack, wince). *BY THE WAY I AM SYLVIA, SYLVIA JEDERMAN*

PROFESSOR: Every sin?

SYLVIA: Sure. If I don't pay for each one, I won't be fully forgiven.

PROFESSOR: Are you sure that's how forgiveness works?

SYLVIA: How else could it work? You can't get anything for free, you know.

PROFESSOR: Well, I think the Bible may say differently.

SYLVIA: Yeah, the Bible ... but who can understand it? I sure can't. I wish I could talk to Jesus personally about this matter.

PROFESSOR: (light bulb) Eureka, I've got it. With the help of my latest invention, maybe we can talk to Jesus about it. I have just developed the world's first time-machine, ~~and here it is. Right there beaut.~~

SYLVIA: Wow -- that would be really timely.

PROFESSOR: Well, let's go and get it ready (goes off stage).

(Time machine brought in.)

PROFESSOR: Here it is. Isn't she a beaut?

SYLVIA: Is it safe?

PROFESSOR: Well, none of the test rats that died told me anything that was wrong.

SYLVIA: OK -- let's go -- I'm starting to get a blister (looks at rear).

PROFESSOR: Let's set the date to 32 A.D.
(set dial, enter machine)

(From inside the machine ...)

PROFESSOR: Power up, flux capacitor on, Coca-Cola full -- we're ready.

(Enter angel, changes date dial to 1775 A.D., motions to audience to keep hushed by placing fingers to lips, giggles, and hustles off.)

PROFESSOR: Here we go.

SYLVIA: I think I would like to go home now (frightened).

(Machine springs to life, shakes, lights blink on and off, then everything shuts down.)

(Professor and Sylvia exit.)

SYLVIA: I don't think we're in Kansas anymore.

PROFESSOR: Looking around, I don't think this is 32 A.D.

(Enter John Newton)

PROFESSOR: Excuse me sir -- what is your name, and what year is this?

JOHN NEWTON: John Newton is the name, and this is 1775 A.D.

SYLVIA: 1775. What went wrong?

PROFESSOR: I don't know -- let me check out this machine.

NEWTON: Where are you from, and what do you seek?

SYLVIA: We're from the future, and I am trying to talk to Jesus about forgiveness.

NEWTON: Forgiveness ... Yes, I wish God could forgive me, but it just can't happen.

SYLVIA: Why not?

NEWTON: I'm a terrible wretch. I am chief of all sinners.

SYLVIA: What did you do? I have a paddle with me.

NEWTON: I don't think that would do. You see, I was captain of a slave trading ship. I brought Africans to America to be sold as slaves.

SYLVIA: That's really bad. Here take a few whacks -- you'll feel better.

NEWTON: I wish it were that simple. I must go now. I hope you find your answer (exit).

PROFESSOR: I don't see what the problem was -- let's try this again (fixes date)

SYLVIA: Again? Oh no.

(Enter machine, repeat sequence, exit machine)

(Angel changes date to 1800 A.D.)

SYLVIA: I don't like that much.

PROFESSOR: (looks at date) Gad Zooks -- not again. Stupid machine. Back in please.

SYLVIA: Wait. That looks like Newton. John, do you remember me?

NEWTON: Did you find your answers? I sure did, right here (shows Bible).

PROFESSOR: See Sylvia -- I told you that would be easier.

SYLVIA: Yeah, yeah, Doc. What did you find in there, John?

NEWTON: That we are all saved through grace, God's grace.

SYLVIA: What does it cost?

NEWTON: Not a thing. It's free.

SYLVIA: FREE? What is this grace thing, anyway?

NEWTON: It's Amazing Grace. So amazing it saves even me, and it will save you, also. Do you want to hear my new song about it?

SYLVIA: Sure.

PROFESSOR: I think I have it now. We must go.

SYLVIA: Sorry, I hope I hear it some day.

NEWTON: Good luck.

(Back in machine, date set for 32 A.D. Angel changes to 1510 A.D., finger to lips, giggles, lights, shakes, etc.)

PROFESSOR: I hope this is it (exits slowly, looks around).

SYLVIA: (exits and looks up to see Martin Luther beating himself.)
Hey, sir, why are you doing that to yourself?

LUTHER: I am a terrible sinner and I must atone for my sin.

SYLVIA: See Professor, I told you.

PROFESSOR: Doesn't the Bible say something about sin and forgiveness?

LUTHER: Yes. The wages of sin is death. We must punish ourselves
to make ourselves righteous once again.

SYLVIA: Told you so.

PROFESSOR: Does the Bible tell you to beat yourself?

LUTHER: Well, not specifically. The church leaders kind of hinted
to me about it. I must continue, excuse me please.

PROFESSOR: Let's try again, Sylvia.

(Back in machine -- you know the routine ...)

SYLVIA: Excuse me, sir, what year is this?

TETZEL: 1517 A.D., my dear. Tell me, do you have sins you have not
dealt with?

SYLVIA: Well, sure I do.

TETZEL: Thought so. You poor lost soul. You are in luck.

SYLVIA: I am?

TETZEL: You have come to the right place, honey. My name is Johanne
Tetzel, and I sell indulgences.

SYLVIA: Indulgences?

TETZEL: Yes, mam, indulgences. Just \$50 will rid you of last month's
sins, and I will even throw in a few months' forgiveness for
a relative who may have passed on. Still not enough? I
will throw in a St. Peter's pen and pencil set.

SYLVIA: Wow -- you mean I don't need to beat myself to gain
forgiveness?

TETZEL: Not now that Honest John is here -- gone are the days of
beatings. For a few dollars, you can be right with God again.
We take cash, check, or all major credit cards.

PROFESSOR: I would be careful with this guy, Sylvia. He seems a bit suspicious.

(hammering is heard -- LUTHER enters from rear of church.)

LUTHER: Sylvia, Professor, so great to see you again. I have some great news to share with you. I see you met Mr. Tetzl. Don't listen to him -- save your money.

SYLVIA: What great news, Mr. Luther?

LUTHER: Look here in Ephesians. "For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith, not by works, lest any man should boast." You see -- FORGIVENESS IS A FREE GIFT FROM GOD. You don't need to pay with money, or pain, or anything. It is free. We are freely forgiven by Christ's blood on the cross. Jesus paid for our sins already.

SYLVIA &
PROFESSOR: THAT IS GREAT NEWS.

SYLVIA: Do we still need to talk to Jesus about this?

LUTHER: You may talk with Jesus at anytime about this and He will give you answers. But He already gave me the answers in the Bible. Remember the story about the prodigal son -- he was forgiven by his father even though he did not deserve it, nor had he earned it. Jesus says that's how it is with us.

SYLVIA I am already forgiven. Wow. Let's go back home and celebrate.

PROFESSOR: If I can get this machine to work right. Hey, look -- "1994" is on the dial already. Cool.

LUTHER: Hey, you are from the future, right?

PROFESSOR: Yes sir, we are.

LUTHER: Can you tell me if anything ever came of the 95 thesis I just nailed out there? No, wait. Don't tell me. I will find out soon enough. Good luck, and God bless you.

SYLVIA &
PROFESSOR: Thanks again, and good luck to you. You're gonna' need it.

(back to 1994.)

PROFESSOR: We made it. It worked (pause) ... nice machine, huh?

SYLVIA: I am just so excited. I can get rid of this (holds up paddle) and hold onto this (holds up Bible). We are saved by God's grace, and we are freely forgiven. Let's sing about that Amazing Grace John Newton and Martin Luther talked about.

Let's sing Hymn #509 -- all verses. / Hymn #509.