

The Widow's Oil Melodrama

By Kathy Applebee

CAST

Ann Teek - The grandmother widow
 Fran Tick - The widow and mother of seven children
 Noah Count - Villainous Henchman of Jezebel (*needs a judge's wig*)
 Robin Dapoor - Unscrupulous villain and Henchman of Jezebel
 Elisha the Tissue Biter - A prophet of God
 Deborah the Daughter: - Daughter of Fran
 Extras – as many children as desired up to 6

Props – jars which are placed in the audience beforehand.

Studio Manager: As our studio audience you'll be making the sound effects. We'll hold up a sign and you make the sound. Let's practice.

(*Holds up Boo Hoo*) Make the sound of crying – Boo Hoo Hoo

(*Holds up Amen*) Amen!

(*Holds up Yuck*) Yuck. And make a face.

(*Holds up Boo Hiss*) Boo Hiss!

Ann Teek: Children! Children! Come in and set the table for supper!

Deborah the Daughter: But grandmother, we haven't got any food for supper.

Ann Teek: Wouldn't the owner of the grocery store let us put some food on credit?

Deborah: No, grandmother. He looked at our account then he said the account of Ann Teek was at its limit. No more credit for Ann Teek.

Ann Teek: Woe is me! Ever since my husband Owen Money died things have been rough. Thank God my son and his wife, who is that famous mourner – Fran Tick -, took me in. But now my son the preacher prophet known as Oliver Israel died ... (*Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign. Starts sobbing into her handkerchief*) Woe is me. Look in the cupboard and see what we have.

Deborah: All that's in the cupboard is a little bit of oil. (*Aside to audience*) Cod Liver Oil. (*Hold up Yuck sign*) Yuck!

Ann Teek: Woe is me! (*Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign. Starts crying*)

Deborah the Daughter: Don't cry, grandmother. Our mother will be home soon. Maybe she found work today.

Ann Teek (*Stopping tears and blowing nose loudly*) Perhaps. She's one of the best professional mourners in the business. It's too bad she only works when someone dies.

Deborah the Daughter: Look, here comes mother now!

Ann Teek: Quick, run to the well and get her some fresh water. She'll be thirsty after a day of weeping and wailing. Then round up the other children.

Deborah the Daughter: Yes, grandmother (*Exit*)

Fran Tick: I'm home!

Ann Teek: Did you work today?

Fran Tick: Yes, Naboth the Vineyard owner passed away and I mourned at his funeral.

Ann Teek: He was such a nice man - and such wonderful grapes. Naboth's vineyard was known to produce the finest grapes and most lovely raisins in all of Israel. But Naboth was a young man. Who'd have thought he'd die this young?

Fran Tick: (*Between sobs*) He was put to death by that wicked Queen Jezebel. When he refused to sell her his vineyard she had false witnesses accuse him of blasphemy. (*Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign*) (*Boo hoo hooing*) So they put him to death!

Ann Teek: How horrible. That Jezebel is the junkiest Jewish jerk on this side of the Jordan. Why I'd like to....

Fran Tick: Here come the children. Not another word. I don't want them to know of the horrible happenings here. (*Children enter*) Good afternoon, my fine children.

(*All the children - did you bring anything to eat?*)

Fran Tick: Yes. They paid me in grapes. (*Children yell "Hurray" "I love grapes" "Grapes are great"*)

Ann Teek: Where are the grapes?

Fran Tick: (*Pulling them from her pocket*) Here they are.

Ann Teek: (*Gazing closer and closer until she is cross eyed*) But, there are only two grapes. How can two grapes possibly feed 2 adults and seven children?

Fran Tick: I'm sure we'll manage somehow.

Studio Manager: That evening the family of the late preaching prophet Oliver Israel carefully divided the two grapes between 9 hungry mouths.

Fran Tick: Let us bow our heads and pray. (*All bow*) We thank thee oh Lord for that which we are about to receive. May you bless it to our bodies. (*Hold up Amen sign*) Amen.

Ann Teek and children: Amen (*Knock on the door*)

Fran Tick: Who's knocking on our door?

Noah: It's me Noah Count and my sidekick Robin Dapoor. Open up in the name of Queen Jezebel (*Boo hiss*)

Fran Tick: Come in. What brings you here?

Noah: We're looking for a Miss Fran Tick, widow of the late preacher prophet Oliver Israel.

Fran: I'm Fran Tick

Robin: Yes, I can see you are. You look like you've been crying.

Fran: Occupational hazard.

Robin: I feel your profession will be coming in quite handy very, very soon, Miss Fran Tick.

Noah: Indeed. You'll have plenty to mourn about if you don't pay your debts. Your house payment is due. We're here to collect. Now cough up the dough.

Fran: We have no money. We have no dough. But perhaps we could manage a cough for you.

Robin: No coughing unless its dough.

Fran: Please, (*Falling to her knees*) Give me a few more days. I'll come up with the money.

Robin: We don't want to wait a few days. Pass over the money or we'll have your children sold into slavery to pay the debt that Owen Money ran up when he joined up with the crazy prophet Elisha the tissue biter.

Fran Tick: Please, give me one more day!

Noah: One more and not a minute more. Come Robin Dapoor, we have other widows to visit tonight. (*Exit*)

Ann Teek: Woe is me! What will we do?

Fran Tick: Let us pray tonight and tomorrow I will see the judge. (*They bow in prayer. Hold up Amen sign*)

Scene 2

Studio Manager: The sun burst above the village in a ball of warm orange flame that could warm the cockles of your heart. Unfortunately there was little else to warm at the home of Miss Fran Tick, her mother-in-law Ann Teek and her seven children.

Deborah the Daughter: What's for breakfast, mother?

Fran: Alas, we shall have to have a spoonful of oil for breakfast. *(Hold up Yuck sign) (Calling off stage)*
Mother Ann, would you bring in the oil and a spoon.

Deborah the Daughter: Not that Cod Liver Oil *(All children make faces and "Yuck". Hold up Yuck sign)*

Ann Teek: I'm afraid I have both good and bad news about the oil.

Fran: What's the bad news?

Ann: We don't have enough oil left for each of us to get a spoonful.

Fran: What's the good news?

Ann: It won't taste as bad if we only get ½ spoonfuls each. Line up children and let your mother feed you the last of our oil. *(Children line up and each gets a half spoonful. They make faces and choking signals and ham it up about how awful it tastes.)*

Fran: Here, Mother Ann - the last drop can be yours.

Ann: No, my dear, you take the last drop. You have to appear in court today. *(They ad lib - you take it, no you. I insist, etc. Finally)*

Fran: Then let us agree to leave this last drop in the jar.

Ann: Agreed. Now God bless you as you visit the judge.

Studio Manager: The judge in town neither feared God nor man. *(Aside to audience)* You can look it up in Luke 18

Fran: I'm here to plead my case before the magistrate. *(Looks closely at the clerk)* Why, you're Robin Dapoor. You were at my house last night. What are you doing here?

Robin: I'm the Court's clerk. Go right in. Judge Noah will see you now. *(Fran enters)* All rise. Here ye, here ye, court in now in session. The honorable *(Villainous laugh)* Judge Dapoor presiding. *(Hold up Boo Hiss sign)* You may be seated.

Fran: *(Head bowed. Then bring head but not eyes up. Hands clasp together, melodramatically beseeching)*
Your honor, grant me justice against my adversary.

Noah Count: *(Wearing a white judge's wig and sitting in a chair)* I don't fear God or care about men. *(Bang gavel)* Case dismissed.

Fran: But, But ... *(Starts crying) (Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign)*

Noah: Knock that phony crying off. Everyone around here knows you're a professional mourner. Those are just crocodile tears.

Fran: No, they are real tears, person tears. *(Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign)*

Noah: I'll not have a whining, weeping, wailing woman in my courtroom - get her out of here.

Robin: Right away your honor. *(Moves to haul her out)*

Fran: *(Finally looking at judge)* I recognize that voice. You're Robin Dapoor!

Robin: That's JUDGE Robin Dapoor to you, Miss Fran Tick. *(Boo Hiss)*

Fran: That's not fair. I appeal my case to a higher court.

Robin: Fine. To a higher court you shall go. *(He takes the wig off as Noah puts blocks or books or something under the chair to make it higher. He passes the wig to Noah who puts in on and seats himself in the chair)*

Robin: All rise. Here ye, here ye, court in now in session. The honorable *(Villainous laugh)* Judge Noah Count presiding. You may be seated.

Fran: This is a travesty of justice. *(Starts crying)*

Noah Count: Case dismissed. *(Bangs gavel)*

Fran: What will I do? Where will I turn?

Studio Manager: This segment of our program is brought to you by

Scene 3

Studio Manager: Now back to our story. When we left off poor Fran Tick had been unable to get justice from the corrupt judges. But God was with her. A mysterious gypsy woman came out of nowhere and drew Fran aside.

Mysterious Gypsy Woman: Don't worry, Fran Tick. There is a man who can be of assistance to you. Have you heard of Elisha the Tissue Biter?

Fran: Yes, isn't he the man that eats Kleenex?

MGW: No, he just bites it to see if it's soft enough for the most delicate nose.

Fran: I could use some of that stuff. Being a professional mourner, I always have to blow my nose.

MGW: The tissue biting is only his cover story. He is actually the prophet who is taking over now that Elijah has been taken away by the chariot of fire.

Fran: I know of Elijah. He was the prophet that recruited my late husband, the preacher prophet Oliver Israel.

MGW: Where did he preach his prophesy?

Fran: All over Israel. That's how he got his name. Before that he was known as Freddie the Fisherman. He specialized in Codfish oil. *(Hold up Yuck sign)*

MGW: Yes, Freddy the Fisherman's Codfish oil. We used to give that to our kids. What happened to your husband?

Fran: Oliver had to go into hiding because Jezebel was on the warpath. A man named Obadiah hid him and 49 other men. He was one of the 7000 who hadn't bowed down to Baal. After Elijah had the contest on Mt. Carmel Oliver joined him to preach. But then he died. *(Starts crying)* I couldn't stop crying for days. People began hiring me for their funerals and I became a professional mourner. But we ran up debts and the mourning business isn't so good. *(Takes a short break to blow her nose so MGW can do her aside)*

MGW: *(Aside to audience)* That's a crying shame...

Fran: Now Elijah is gone and I have no one to turn to. The judges that junky Jewish jerk Jezebel appoint are corrupt through and through. And if I don't pay the debts those despicable henchmen of Jezebel the junky Jewish Jerk will sell my children into slavery. *(Starts crying) (Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign)*

MGW: Then you have not heard. Elisha has taken Elijah's place as leader. Go to him. See what he can do.

Fran: I am Fran Tick and I will do as you suggest. Goodbye, mysterious gypsy woman.

MGW: *(Waving)* Good bye

Studio Manager: Fran hurried off to find Elijah the Tissue Biter. He was sitting at the gates of Jerusalem biting tissues when our heroine arrived.

Fran: Are you Elisha the Tissue Biter?

Elisha: I'm not sitting here flossing, if that's what you think.

Fran: (*Melodramatically with her hand on her forehead*) I am in desperate straits. My children are about to be sold into slavery to pay the debts of my husband. Oliver Israel.

Elisha: Oliver Israel. I'll say he was. Oliver was a good man and an excellent preaching prophet (*Aside to audience*) Except when he tried to get me to take his codfish oil medicine. (*Hold up Yuck sign*) Nasty stuff. (*Makes a sour face*) Now can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?

Fran: Your servant has nothing there at all, except a little oil.

Elisha: Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your children. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.

Fran: Thank you. I'm so happy I could cry. I think I will. (*Boo hoos all the way home*)

Studio Manager: Fran Tick boo hoo hooed all the way home. (*Hold up Boo Hoo Hoo sign*) Then she did just as Elisha the Tissue biter had instructed her.

Fran: Children. I need you to go ask all the neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then bring them all back to me.

Studio Manager: So the children did (*Children go out into the audience and get the jars placed their before the show*). They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her daughter.

Fran: Bring me another one.

Deborah the Daughter: There is not a jar left.

Studio Manager: Then the oil stopped flowing. She went and told the man of God

Elisha: Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your children can live on what is left.

Studio Manager: And so they did. And they all lived happily ever after. (*Hold up Amen sign*) This melodrama was brought to you by the drama ministry at the Kempsville Church of Christ. It's based on 2 Kings 2.

Fran: I'm _____ and I played Fran Tick. In 2 Kings 4 Elisha helps a widow whose children will be sold to pay her debts. The part about the oil miraculously filling all the jars is true.

Elisha: But the part about Elisha being a Tissue Biter was made up. Elisha was actually called the Tishbite. I'm _____ and I played Elisha...

Robin: I'm _____ and I played Robin Dapoor. There was a wicked Queen Jezebel and she did have Naboth murdered so she could take his vineyard.

Noah: I'm _____ and I played Noah Count. My character was of no account but we will all have to account for our actions to God. Jezebel did and it wasn't pretty.

Ann: I'm _____ and I played Ann Teek. Many times people, and not just widows, feel like they don't get justice. Jesus told the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 8. Even though he did not fear God or care for men he eventually gave her justice so she would not wear him out by her coming before him

Studio Manager: Jesus told the parable to teach us that we should always pray and not give up. Not even when things seem hopeless. Not even when our debts are more than we can pay. You see Jesus paid our debts for us when he died on the cross. We'd like to end with a song "He paid a debt he did not owe"