

THE CROCK POT

by
Emily Schmidt

Pilot - "Turning the Tables"

A half-hour, single-camera sitcom

Minnesota Kitsch Meets Church Basement Bitch

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EXT. FIELD OF CORN - MORNING

A voiceover interrupts the sun-kissed green and gold farmland. The voice is earnest, presentational and very Minnesotan.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
On the first day, God created
light.

The sun rises over a field of corn. A road sign reads:
WELCOME TO FRIENDLY FRIDLEY, MINNESOTA!

EXT. SKY - DAY

CLAIRE (V.O.)
On the second day, God created the
skies.

A plane flies past, pulling a banner that reads: OLAFSON
POOLS - BLOWOUT SALE - WHATEVER FLOATS YER BOAT!

PAN DOWN TO

EXT. OLAFSON POOLS - DAY

A cheapy surplus barn with a sign that says: OLAFSON POOLS!
CLASS UP YOUR YARD TODAY! The sign also features a picture of
Claire, her husband and two kids - all blonde with wide
smiles.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

CLAIRE (V.O.)
On the third day, God divided the
land from the seas.

Men in trucker hats tinker with a boat. Toddlers in diapers
wade around near the beach. Teens make out on a slow-moving
pontoon. Middle aged women in bikinis and curlers drink beer
on folding chairs.

JOY, heavysset and intimidating, yells for her husband, FRANK.
He's in a wheelchair and fishing off the dock.

Frank, having hooked too powerful of a fish, rolls off the
dock and into the water, unable to stop himself.

EST. LAKE - DAY

CLAIRE (V.O.)
On the fourth day, God created the
seasons.

The shot is divided into four sections, all the same view of the lake, during each season. In all four shots, there is someone fishing, waterskiing/skating, and jetskiing/snowmobiling.

EXT. SKY - DAY

CLAIRE (V.O.)
On the fifth day, God created the
birds and fish.

A flock of geese flies across the sky, picturesque. A few birds are suddenly shot down.

PAN DOWN TO

EXT. FIELD

RUTH, a resourceful and quirky brunette, proudly puts down her gun.

EST. GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH - MORNING

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People mill about, drink coffee, eat very plain pastries and gossip in the church commons.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - SAME

CLAIRE, JOY and RUTH sit on folding chairs in the church basement, in a circle of mostly empty chairs that won't be filled.

We pan around the circle, focusing on each woman briefly.

CLOSE ON Claire, who wears the perfect amount of out-of-date Maybelline, her bottle-blond hair done up and her Kohl's casual dress wrinkle-free.

CLOSE ON Joy. Her dress is just a bit too low-cut and her ample bosom uncomfortably escapes the lace detailing. She consistently smirks.

CLOSE ON Ruth, dressed simply and modestly in elastic-waistband denim. She is the plainest of the three. Her eyes occasionally dart up as if she sees something in her periphery, like a cat.

CLAIRE

And on the sixth day, God created people and animals.

JOY

And thus, by association, my seven layer bars.

Ruth reflects on an ongoing mystery.

RUTH

I swear one of those layers is peanut butter, because one time my throat swelled up.

Joy snaps back.

JOY

You'll never know!

CLAIRE

Focus! Focus. Now, what does the creation story mean to you?

JOY

It means God took time making everything perfect.

(beat)

The Torgerson girl could take note.

CLAIRE

Joy! Leave that poor woman alone.

JOY

I'll take this conversation trolley where I darn well please.

(beat)

The wedding was a disaster. They catered from...Old Country Buffet.

RUTH

Really?

CLAIRE
 (exasperated)
 Let's remember, on the eighth day,
 God rested.

JOY
 Speaking of, from the pictures, it
 looks like the mother of the bride
 has been doing a lot of... resting.

RUTH
 That's right! Barb got a hoveround!

JOY
 Yep, because she's too fat to stand
 up.

RUTH
 I'm praying for her.

JOY
 I'm praying for her hoveround.

CLAIRE
 Ladies!
 (beat)
 I've been looking forward to
 leading Bible Study for three weeks
 now, and I'm very busy. I'm a
working mother!

Joy smirks and reaches out to touch Ruth's arm.

JOY
 It's okay, Ruth, she didn't mean
 anything by it. She's self-centered
 by nature.

CLAIRE
 Ruth, I know you'd have kids if you
 could.

JOY
 It's just not something God wants
 for you.

CLAIRE
 Exactly. So, if we could stay on
 track and get back to Genesis.

Joy puts down her Bible Study materials, ignoring Claire.

JOY

Ladies, I was moved. This week something came over me - my first guess was the Holy Spirit, obviously. And I was right.

RUTH

Oh my goodness!

JOY

I know. I know. He told me that even though today was supposed to be Claire's day to lead, I should bring in a different verse and take over.

CLAIRE

Is this because Pastor Ed is stopping by?

JOY

You should be grateful you ever got the chance to lead at all. You know that's not typically the role of vice president.

(beat)

Anywho - he called me this week.

RUTH

Ooh! You were called by the Holy Spirit?!

JOY

No, Pastor Ed.

Ruth nods in understanding.

JOY (CONT'D)

He's going to sit in today. Maybe even...participate. And the Holy Spirit picked a specific verse for me to present.

CLAIRE

(sarcastic)

Sure he did.

Joy picks up her Bible, flips around and randomly reaches a verse.

JOY

Yep. The Holy Spirit just helped me find it right now. Matthew...12:12.

RUTH
I'm getting chills!

JOY
Let's get a head start so that
we're prepared with only eloquent
observations when the pastor gets
here.

(beat)
I'm looking at you, Ruth.
(beat)
And Jesus went into the temple of
God, and cast out all them that
sold and bought in the temple, and
overthrew the tables of the
moneychangers, and the seats of
them that sold doves.

PASTOR ED enters - he's tall, sunburned and handsome, very
blonde. All the ladies' heads turn to soak up his clean-cut,
corn-fed good looks.

RUTH
(quickly)
I'm the most eloquent!

Joy shakes her head.

JOY
Chill the enthusiasm, Ruth.

PASTOR ED
I don't want to interrupt.

CLAIRE
Never. Please, have a seat.

Ruth pats the chair next to her.

PASTOR ED
Thanks, ladies. As you know, we've
had a few problems with the new
pulpit construction.

CUT TO:

INT. SANCTUARY - MORNING

The congregation watches as a pulpit is lowered into the
front of the church. It has a Star of David on it.

The congregation GASPS.

CUT BACK

PASTOR ED

Well, we were tested.

JOY

We certainly were. The Lord tests us every day.

PASTOR ED

No. I mean, they actually came in and tested the new mic system and it turns out it's going to cost a lot more than we thought.

CLAIRE

(quietly considering)

We could always have a hobby fair -

JOY

(loudly)

Two words: Hobby Fair. It will be big. Massive.

PASTOR ED

Sounds crafty. Ladies will love it. Well, the ladies and Bruce the doll collector. If you could find a way to get your husbands involved, too? Maybe a meat raffle?

RUTH

I'm not married. Single. Single and mingling. We match!

CLAIRE

Ruth, what happened to Artie?

RUTH

Long distance is hard. Especially when you've never met. And mostly? He's not a cat person! Oh, and turns out he has several wives across the country.

PASTOR ED

I'm really sorry to hear that. God has a plan for you.

RUTH

Yeah, I've thrown myself back into the professional world. People need their scrapbooking supplies!

JOY

Leave the desperation at home,
Ruth.

RUTH

(to Pastor Ed)

Well, if you know of anyone who is
planning on having a summer of
memories or needs crimpy
scissors...

PASTOR ED

Not currently, but I'll know who to
call...*Miss* Munson.

They share a weird smile - flirty, yet somehow disconcerting.

JOY

We'll call it Ye Olde Scande-German
Hobby Fair. I just thought that up,
just now. This is why I'm a natural
leader.

Claire tries to stay casual and fun, but she can't help but
say something through her clenched smile.

CLAIRE

Just because Pastor Larsen's last
words vaguely suggested that you
should lead the women's Bible
Study...

PASTOR ED

(uncomfortable)

A hobby fair is a great idea!

JOY

Claire, you should make chocolates.
I know it's probably more batches
than you're used to making at a
time... but take one for the team.

PASTOR ED

That sounds great. Much
appreciated, gals. I knew I could
count on you.

Ruth awkwardly touches his leg.

RUTH

Anytime.

JOY

Too eager, Ruth.

Her hand snaps back.

Sorry. RUTH