

BANANA THIEF – 1914

REALISTIC DRAMA

Suitable Years: **years 5 to10**

Number of Students: 5

Cast:

Magistrate

Clerk Of The Court

Myrtle Wetherall – *witness*

Karl Nordgren – *thief, non speaking part*

Hannah – *non speaking part*

Venue:

York Courthouse Complex, 1874 Courtroom

Synopsis:

Two domestic servants arrive home to find a man stealing a banana. The case is taken to court and the thief receives three months hard labour.

Costume:

The two servants would be dressed in the style of 1914. They would have long hair, pinned up neatly. They might have dark coloured skirts and white blouses with a high neck and long sleeves. They might wear a brooch at the neck.

York Courthouse Complex has some costumes available for student use. Ask at time of booking.

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Karl Nordgen is seated next to a policeman at the front of the court. The Clerk of the Court is seated at a small table and writes in a journal throughout the proceedings. Myrtle Wetherall and Hannah are seated at the front of the court. As the magistrate enters, the court (everyone) rises and sits when the magistrate is seated.

CLERK 1914. The case of: Crown versus Karl Nordgren. The crown calls Myrtle Wetherall.

Myrtle moves into the witness box, escorted by the clerk. They mime the action of her swearing in with one hand on the bible. That done, she faces the magistrate.

MAGISTRATE Please state your name and position.

MYRTLE
WETHERALL My name is Myrtle Wetherall and I am a domestic servant at the Parker farm at Grassdale.

MAGISTRATE The police have charged a man with stealing from your master's house. Do you see that man in court today?

MYRTLE
WETHERALL Yes Your Worship. That's him over there.

MAGISTRATE Are you certain Myrtle? Can you be sure that this is the man?

MYRTLE
WETHERALL Yes Your Worship. I would know him anywhere.

MAGISTRATE Tell the court what happened. What did you see? It's all right, Myrtle, don't be nervous. Just tell us in your own words what happened.



MYRTLE
WETHERALL On August 30th, everyone was out for the day and my friend Hannah and I had been given the day off. We had gone into York to visit some friends. When we returned at 5.30, I saw that the back door was open. I know that I had locked that door when we left. I went into the house. Then... I heard a noise coming from Mrs Parker's bedroom. I went into the bedroom and found that man over there (*points to Karl Nordgren*) standing at Mrs Parker's dressing table. One of the drawers was open. He was surprised and startled. He turned around and started moving towards me.

MAGISTRATE Did he touch you or strike at you?

MYRTLE
WETHERALL No, I think he was going to try to get past me but I grabbed him and dragged him into the dining room and called out to Hannah. She also got hold of him and we dragged him outside to the verandah and told him to empty his pockets.

MAGISTRATE What did he have in his pockets?

MYRTLE
WETHERALL He had a banana. He only turned out his coat pockets. We didn't make him turn out his trouser pockets.

MAGISTRATE What did he say to you?

MYRTLE
WETHERALL He said that he was looking for work and then, before we could stop him, he grabbed the banana and left. He had taken that banana from the dining room.

MAGISTRATE Was anything else missing?

MYRTLE
WETHERALL Yes Your Worship. I had left my purse in the servants' dining room. I know that there were six pennies and a threepence in silver. After that man had left and I checked my purse, the money was gone.

MAGISTRATE The house was open when you returned you said?

MYRTLE Yes Your Worship. I know that we locked the kitchen
WETHERALL door and the back door. He must have broken in Sir.

MAGISTRATE Thank you Myrtle you have been most clear. You
may step down.

*The clerk motions for Karl Nordgren to stand up. He
does so.*

MAGISTRATE Karl Nordgren, do you have anything to say?

Prisoner shakes his head

MAGISTRATE The court finds the accused Karl Nordgren guilty of
breaking and entering the property of Mr J Parker and
stealing food. You are sentenced to three months
hard labour.

*A policeman moves over to Karl Nordgren and
escorts him from the court.*