

## Pantry capers

[Adapted from Max Lucado's "God came near", Anzea Publishers, 1987, pp 113-117 (Light of the... Storage Closet)]

1 Reader (R), 4 candles of different sizes and shapes (C1, C2, C3 & C4). 4 people in black. Matches for each person. Better in a dark (night) setting.

R You'd never believe it, but a few nights ago...well, I swear this is true:

We were in the middle of a thunder storm and I was reading my Bible when there was a peal of thunder so close it made me jump. You could hear the night sizzle with the lightning at the same time.

Then everything in the house went out – the lights, the TV and video (not that we were watching it) and the microwave.

I had to grope my way to the pantry – to get some candles, not a snack...well, while I was there, I might be able to find a little something to nibble on.

I found four candles to chose from. I lit each of them in turn to see which would be the best one.

[C1 to C4 lit in turn by the person holding it]

Great I thought, just what I needed. They all gave out so much light that I could use all of them – and there were my favourite biscuits as well!

I would use one for my desk, one for the kitchen, one for Shiela to knit by, and one for the living room.

I grabbed the largest one and was turning to leave when I heard a voice.

C1 Stop, you're not taking me out of the pantry.

R Well, I did stop...and I wondered if one of the kids had woken up, thought of biscuits too, and was hiding in the dark close by.

So I said "OK, that's a good joke – you can come out now and we'll both have some biscuits".

No answer. I took another step.

C1 I said stop!

R I began to tremble. What with the voice, dark and thunder and all. I yelled into the night "Who said that?"

C1 I did.

R The voice came from near my hand. "Who are you, what are you?" I stuttered.

C1 I'm the candle you're holding, wax for brains.

R I looked around wildly, but I couldn't see anyone else. I then looked closer at the candle and I could make out a face – I could hardly believe my eyes.

[Person holding C1 raises candle to face]

C1 You can't take me out of here!

R "What?" I said incredulously.

- C1 [*Slow and deliberately*] I said, you...can't...take...me...out...of...here.
- R “What do you mean, I can't take you out of here?” Then moving on from the incredulous, I stated the perfectly obvious “You're a candle, you give light, this is what you're suppose to do – it's dark out there and we need your light to see by. And you call me ‘wax for brains’?”
- C1 But I'm not ready to go yet. I need to be better prepared!
- R Well, now I was dumbfounded. “Better prepared? What are you trying to be? A boy scout?”
- C1 No, no, no. You don't understand! I need to do more research so I can perform better in my light-giving.
- R I couldn't believe my ears. “More preparation?”
- C1 Yes of course. Light-giving is an important job. It's absolutely critical I do it right the first time and not make a mistake. What would happen if I flickered at the wrong time – you might grab a tin of sardines instead of these biscuits you wanted.
- R “Yes, but...” was all I could think of saying.
- C1 So you see, I just have to stay here and study. I've just finished a book on ‘Stopping flickering – a guide to positive self-talk’. It was really motivational. And I'm also listening to a great series of tapes on flame display. It gives you step-by-step instructions on wick build-up and conservation. The tapes are called ‘Waxing eloquently’. Have you heard of it?
- R “Uh, no...I can't say I have” I answered.
- I gave up with the first candle and put it back down on the shelf.
- [*C1 person lowers candle from face*]
- As I was about to blow it out, I turned to the other candles and said “Well, at least I have you guys”.
- [*People holding C2, C3 & C4 raise their candles to their faces*]
- C2-C4 Oh no, you're not taking us either!
- C3 And I'm not a guy either!
- R Oh no, it was a conspiracy! A wicked, devious plot! Enough to enflame any decent person's anger.
- “What did you say you wax heads!” I shouted. “It's your calling in life to act as lights indark situations!”
- C2 Well, that's what you think buster!
- C4 Yeah, I'm busy!
- R “Busy?” Did I have wax in my ears?
- C4 Yeah, busy; I'm busy meditating on what it means to be a light in dark places...it's really enlightening.
- R Controlling my anger, I tried to reason (even though I was feeling rather light-headed now). “Look, I can appreciate you wanting to do better at what you do,

study and meditate and all that, but you have been in here for weeks and not been disturbed – isn't it time you come out now and do what you're suppose to?"

C3 Well, I think I can safely say, on behalf of the others, that no, we can't. We all need to get our act together in some way or other – trim our wicks, control our hot-headedness, or just learn to cope with the drips of this world.

R She paused then, and it seemed she was referring to me, not the melted wax running down her side.

C2 That's right. Me for instance, I know that lighting the darkness isn't my gift.

R "And what exactly is your gift then" I retorted.

C2 Singing

R "Oh sure" I said with just a hint of sarcasm.

C2 Well, I'll show you...

[C2 starts singing "My little light", with others joining in, including C1]

R "Enough" I cried. But they sang only louder. There was nothing left to do but blow them out.

[Reader to blow candles out. Try and time the blowing out with when they reach the line "Won't let Satan puff me out", Each candle stops singing when puffed out. ]

I had to tell Sheila that I couldn't find any candles that worked. She said "That's funny, I thought those candles I got from that church that closed down on Pitt Street more than adequate". Well, now I know – they were church candles that never made it out of the pit.