

Six Shades of Purple by Dean Nadasdy Lent 5: The Very Stone

For Lent 5, based on Luke 20:9-19

Focus:

Though some reject the cornerstone that is Jesus Christ, others find it and there banquet on the grace of God.

Characters:

Barker - Estate auctioneer; high-brow but with a smidgen of down-home auctioneering still left in him; well-dressed

Crowd - A mixed bunch, some sophisticated, some rude, others non-committal; have at least eight people in the crowd; four of these have speaking parts

Comic Figure (C.F.) - dressed as mime with white face, suspenders and tight-fitting shirt; moves in clownish fashion; carries look of delight over newly found treasure

Setting:

An estate auctioneer is selling the last item on his list, a large stone. The stone can be left to the imagination. Better, though, would be a visible stone made of paper mache and chicken wire, painted appropriately. The stone should have a reasonably flat surface on the top to serve as a table for C.F. Putting a spotlight on C.F. once the crowd exits would enhance the action.

Barker: And that, friends, leaves us with this, the very stone so dear to the departed for so many years. Surely one would expect the bidding to start at an honorable figure.

1: *(shouted out in heckler style)* Sorry, pal, the pet rock craze has been over for a long time.

Barker: Sir, this is no pet rock. It was the very stone on which the old mansion was built. A cornerstone, you might say. Yes, who will bid on this cornerstone, marked for all time as that which held together the Rutledge Mansion, the historic home of our most esteemed family?

2: That's debatable, Barker. Old Man Rutledge was a slaver every day of his live. He treated people like pawns. 'Built his whole life on the work of others.'

Barker: *(chooses to ignore comment)* Do I have an opening bid?

3: \$5.00!

Barker: I didn't hear that, Billy Bobb! We don't take bids of \$5.00 on anything.

3: I wouldn't exactly call that rock a piece of merchandise. I was just trying to take it off your hands. Why, it'll cost me that much to pull it over to the creek-side so the kids can jump off it into the water.

Barker: I told you once, and I'll not repeat it, Billy Bobb. We don't take bids of \$5.00 on anything.

2: Why don't you buy the stone if you like it so much, Barker?

Barker: I am the seller here, ma'am, not buyer. Now do we have an honorable bid or not?

1: The man's worried. I can see it on his face. The guy's business is on the rocks, folks! *(crowd laughs)*

4: *(with a sophisticated flair, steps before the crowd to Barker's rescue)* Friends, perhaps we owe this stone and this good man a bit more respect than we seem willing to afford either of them. For if this stone is indeed the very cornerstone of the old mansion, it does possess some historic value. Might we not consider a bid befitting its value and propose a hallowed site for the stone in the town square, as a remembrance of the Golden Age of the South?

1: Sounds good! *(to 4)* Make your bid, Mr. Canning.

- 4: I was suggesting, sir, a mutual bid from the members of the community gathered here. Could we not caucus and come to Mr. Barker with a bona fide offer on behalf of the town?
- 2: You're talking bond issue, Canning. The town won't even vote in the money for a stoplight. What makes you think they'd buy a rock?
- Barker: Do we have a bid? (*silence*)
- 3: What happens if you don't get a bid, Barker?
- Barker: My instructions are to leave the stone here.
- 3: Here? What good will it do anybody here?
- Barker: Those are my instructions. (*glances at watch*) Now for the last time, I ask for a bid on the stone. (*silence*) Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. This closes the estate auction. Kindly see the cashier at the gate as you leave. All items cash and carry. (*Barker exits; crowd exits as they discuss the sale; stone is left behind; stage/chancel lights down; spot to stone*)
- C.F.: (*enters carrying sack over his shoulder; initially passes by stone; then looks back; smiles; returns to stone; walks around it; struggles to lift it; fails; looks to audience; smiles a broad smile; walks about stone again; sits on floor; leans against stone; naps for a count of 30; wakes; stands; looks in sack; looks to audience; smiles same broad smile; takes red-checkered tablecloth out of sack and spreads it on flat surface of stone; looks into sack again; removes loaf of bread and plate from sack and places these on tablecloth; looks into sack again; removes bottle of wine and glass and places them on tablecloth; stands before the meal; breaks bread; pours wine; reaches for bread; remembers; folds hands and raises head for prayer; smiles to audience; eats of bread; drinks of wine; smiles again; begins to pack bread away; changes mind; puts all back in place; with sweeping motion of his hands, makes invitation for all to come; walks about stone with broad smile; takes empty sack and exits as spot highlights feast awaiting all.*)

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