



# **A Stitch In Time**

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from *Labor Saving Devices*

LABOR SAVING DEVICES IS A COLLECTION OF THREE TEN-MINUTE PLAYS  
SUITABLE FOR READING OR STAGING

**BY TOM BROWN**

## THE CAST

Mr. Carrion, Union Representative

Mr. Weaver, A Laborer

Worker 1 (Man)

Worker 2 (Woman)

Worker 3 (Man)

**The play opens with Mr. Carrion returning from a big Union - Management meeting. He hastily calls the workers he represents to update them on...**

CARRION: Well, all of you know that the union reps met over lunch today — with the honchos from corporate headquarters.

WEAVER: Ha!

CARRION: Lots of stuff to tell...

WORKER 3: Is this gonna take long?

CARRION: No, I'll be quick.

WEAVER: Real quick, Carrion! I'm running behind.

CARRION: Okay, okay. First, profits company-wide are up, but I'm afraid they're not nearly as up as the top ducks would like. They didn't say this, but I had the feeling the brass felt we could have produced a heck of a lot more than we did. You folks know we can never be sure what HQ *really* thinks about us. Know what I mean?

WORKERS: [disgruntled mumbles]

WEAVER: You got that right!

CARRION: But, like all these union-management meetings, there was some good news mixed in with the bad. Let me give you the good first. The company's going to declare a quarterly dividend, so those of you with stock will have a chunk of change in your mailbox soon.

WORKER 2: All right!

CARRION: And the V.P. of Marketing said that bookings for the next quarter are way up. He was *so* positive about sales that he was starting to sound like "Happy Days Are Here Again!" until the big finance guy, the C.F.O. guy, cut him off and said that bookings don't count till they become hard-and-firm orders.

WEAVER: Well, ain't that a stitch!

CARRION: But, hey guys (sorry, Jean, I mean you, too)... Hey, folks: sounds like the company is feeling *pretty* good about how we're doing against the competition both here and overseas.

WORKERS: [happier mumbles]

CARRION: Now I guess that every cloud must have... No, well, that's not exactly the right.... Well, let me just...

WEAVER: C'mon, Carrion, just say it, will ya?

CARRION: Look, what I'm getting at... I need to talk about... I need to say something about this thing about... about the company, er, this plant, being profitable but... but... not as profitable as it... *could* be. Well, what the C.F.O. actually said was that, the way he put it...

WEAVER: What in the name of... what *are* you talking about?

CARRION: You see, the corporation has a formula... which I'm pretty darn sure the union leaders have agreed to. I don't remember seeing anything, but this formula lays out how many workers and how many work hours and how many tons of product is supposed to be produced and... and... if the formula doesn't hold up, well, then... if it, umm, if we fall, if *anyone* falls below that measurement line, well, then...

WEAVER: Anybody here know what's he's driving at?

WORKERS: [confused mumbles]

CARRION: Okay, let me be blunt. Seems like the corporation and the union have agreed that we aren't as profitable as we, this plant, should be!

WEAVER: But we are profitable, right? We are, aren't we? Right?

CARRION: Yeah, we're profitable. But we're two-tenths below what the formula...

WEAVER: Two tenths!

CARRION: And that may not seem like a big number, but to the corporation — and even to the union — it means that the company can now, legally and all, they can now start talking about moving our work over to, to...

WEAVER: You mean for a measly bit of profit, for a dime... for *less* than a dime... is it even a dime? You mean: even though we are profitable, that they would move us and this operation over to...

CARRION: Look, I didn't say they *would* move us.

WEAVER: [stands; finger pointing] Sounded like that to me!

CARRION: I said they have *the right* to move the work. Our work. That's all. It's about the work. They can shut us down and move the work...

WEAVER: [sits back down] C'mon, Carrion. What did you say about that? Son of a... what did you say? C'mon, will ya? The union! The union! Did you... C'mon! Did you tell them that the union will strike over this, that we will shut this place down *so fast* it would make their heads twist sideways, did you tell 'em that?

CARRION: The top union guys, at the big meeting, all shook their heads in agreement when the C.F.O. told us that we might not be here in six months or so. That our work could move... He, they, it all seemed kind of agreed to, Weaver. Get real.

WORKERS: [angry mumbles]

WEAVER: Carrion, what are you talking about? *Not be here?*

CARRION: All right, that's about all I can say, guys. Nothing's firm. Nothing's settled. I guess it's just something we need to keep thinking about. No use letting it mess up meeting any deadlines or anything. It's just something to be thinking about. Don't let it ruin your day...

WEAVER: Move... work... *where*? Even though we're profitable. Ain't that a stitch!

CARRION: Nothing's certain 'cept death and taxes. It was just discussed.

WEAVER: Discussed? You mean *decided*, don't you?

CARRION: At today's meeting, this all... all of this came up, and I thought I should tell you. They told me *to be sure* to tell all of you. Nothing's going to happen for at least six months. So I did. I told you. But it's not for certain. Not yet. So, just think about it. That's all I'm saying. Think about it.

WEAVER: Sure, we'll think about it, Carrion.

CARRION: Just think about it, please...

WEAVER: Sure, Carrion. [pause] Ain't that a stitch!

**For more information about the author,  
go to <http://www.tombrown.us>.**

