

# Bernie and the Beast

Marsha Sheiness



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BERNIE AND THE BEAST

A comedy in one act

by

Marsha Lee Sheiness

CAST

**BERNIE:** Middle 70's

**EVELYN:** Late 60's

Both **BERNIE** and **EVELYN** are small in stature but giants in spirit.

Place

BERNIE and EVELYN, married for forty-two years, are lost somewhere in South Dakota. As the evening unfolds at the Blue Lagoon Motel they reveal their many levels of love and dependency as well as a solid commitment to a loving, enduring relationship.

Time

The present.

*At Rise: A room at the Blue Lagoon Motel. Summer, just after sundown. We hear a key in the lock. The door opens. BERNIE enters, wearing a hat. HE feels along the wall for a light switch. EVELYN enters and stays in the doorway.*

BERNIE: Where's the damn light switch?

EVELYN: What's that over there?

BERNIE: Over where?

EVELYN: Between those two beds, there's a lamp. Try turning it on.

BERNIE: *(crossing to lamp)* Probably doesn't work.

EVELYN: There's one way to find out.

*(BERNIE turns on the lamp, it works. EVELYN surveys the room)*

EVELYN: Tacky, tacky, yuck! I don't like your Blue Lagoon Motel one bit.

BERNIE: Since when is this my motel? I don't remember signing any papers.

EVELYN: You picked it.

BERNIE: You told me to pull in.

EVELYN: I said, "There's one."

BERNIE: I told you we should have stopped ten miles back before it got dark.

EVELYN: Wasn't ready to stop ten miles back.

BERNIE: I'm not the one who's afraid to drive at night. What do you want me to do?

EVELYN: Nothing to do except get the bags. I don't drive nowhere after dark-thirty.

BERNIE: I'm not going to drag them in here if you're going to change your mind in five minutes.

EVELYN: I'm making no promises.

BERNIE: Maybe I can make it worth your while. Will a hundred do it?

EVELYN: Chicken feed.

BERNIE: How about two?

EVELYN: Chickie, chickie, chickie! El Cheapo!

BERNIE: El Cheapo? Since when am I El Cheapo?

EVELYN: Ever since our first date.

BERNIE: Two-fifty is my final offer.

EVELYN: You've got yourself a deal.

BERNIE: *(reaches for his wallet)* You got change for a hundred?

*(EVELYN opens her bag, takes out a fifty-dollar bill. THEY exchange bills)*

EVELYN: Sugar Daddy.

BERNIE: How do you figure that after forty-two years?

EVELYN: Sweet and Sour Daddy.

BERNIE: That sounds more like it. I'm going to check in. (*gives her a kiss on the cheek*)

EVELYN: Leave my makeup case under the seat. I won't be needing it.

BERNIE: Since when?

EVELYN: Don't know how long I'll be staying. Haven't made up my mind.

BERNIE: We made a deal and you're going to stick to it.

EVELYN: Maybe I will and maybe I won't.

BERNIE: Damn Beast. (*HE exits*)

EVELYN: You got that right. (*SHE opens door to the bathroom, turns on the light, and looks it over. Tests both beds, one is very firm, one is very soft. SHE turns on the air-conditioner, then opens a curtain that covers a clothes rack*) Damn flea-joint!! (*SHE turns the TV set on and off, lifts the receiver on the telephone, listens for dial tone, replaces receiver. Opens each drawer of the chest-of-drawers to check for cleanliness as BERNIE enters carrying two heavy suitcases*)

BERNIE: Where do you want me to put these?

EVELYN: Where's my makeup case?

BERNIE: I thought you said you didn't want it.

EVELYN: Changed my mind.

(*BERNIE puts the two suitcases down*)

BERNIE: I should have married your twin sister.

EVELYN: It's not too late! She's looking for her third husband. And she still has all her teeth.

BERNIE: What else do you want out there?

EVELYN: All I want is my makeup case. (*BERNIE has a severe pain in his stomach that forces him to lose his breath and sit*) What happened? (*HE is unable to answer*) Did you take your medicine?

BERNIE: (*with effort*) When did I have time to take my medicine?

EVELYN: It's past due.

BERNIE: I know that. Where is it? (*Checks his pant pockets*)

EVELYN: In that pill caddy I bought you. I saw you use it this morning.

BERNIE: Then you were hallucinating. That pill caddy is at home in my desk drawer. Look in your purse. I may have put the pills in your purse this morning.

EVELYN: (*looking through her purse*) What's wrong with that pill caddy?

BERNIE: I can never get the damn thing open without hurting my thumb.

EVELYN: If you're not going to use it then I want it back.

BERNIE: You can have it back.

EVELYN: (*finds his pills in her purse and hands bottle to him*) Here. What the hell are your pills doing in my purse?

BERNIE: You really are a beast!

EVELYN: Brutal beast.

BERNIE: Mean. (*takes out a pill*)

EVELYN: Mean and ornery. Sit still, I'll get you some water. (*goes into the bathroom*)

BERNIE: How 'bout some news, Beast? (*turns on the TV set, gets snowy static on all channels*) Don't tell me the damn TV doesn't work!

EVELYN'S VOICE: The air-conditioner works fine.

BERNIE: I'm not talking about the air-conditioner. I want to watch the news.

EVELYN'S VOICE: Then turn on the television set. (*enters*)

BERNIE: I've got it on. I can't get a picture. (*turns TV set off*) Dammit!!

EVELYN: What's the matter with you?

BERNIE: If we'd have stopped ten miles back, we'd have a decent place to stay and a TV that works.

EVELYN: (*sitting on a bed*) You were driving. — Which bed do you want?

BERNIE: I don't care!

EVELYN: This one is hard as a rock, (*sits on the other bed*) and this one stinks. Sit on it.

(*BERNIE sets water glass down, and then crosses toward the bed*)

BERNIE: What's wrong with it? (*sits and sinks into the mattress*) Ninety-eight a night for this?

EVELYN: Plus tax. -- I'll sleep on it.

BERNIE: What's the other one like?

EVELYN: Hard as a rock. I want my makeup case.

BERNIE: I'll get it.

EVELYN: That's a good Bernsie.

BERNIE: Who do you think you're talking to? We left the dog at home.

EVELYN: Should have brought him with us.

BERNIE: Sure. Then we'd never find a place to stay.

EVELYN: We could sleep in the car.

BERNIE: Since when would you agree to sleep in the car?

EVELYN: Since I don't have to. -- If you want to listen to the news, why don't you bring the transistor radio in when you get my makeup case?

BERNIE: Where is it?

EVELYN: Where it always is -- in the glove compartment.

BERNIE: Since when is it always in the glove compartment?

EVELYN: Since I put it there.

BERNIE: Then why didn't you say so?

EVELYN: Do you speak English?

BERNIE: I was under the impression that I did.

EVELYN: Perhaps you've been under a false impression.

BERNIE: I don't seem to have any trouble with anyone but you.

EVELYN: That's what you think. What about the gas station attendant?

BERNIE: That was three days ago. Any idiot ought to know not to put regular gas into a brand new Caddie.

EVELYN: Sorry I brought it up.

BERNIE: You don't know what happened anyway, you were in the little girl's room.

EVELYN: I was in the women's room.

BERNIE: Same thing.

EVELYN: Are you telling me you don't know the difference between a little girl and a grown woman?

BERNIE: Yes, I know the difference! The fact is -- you weren't there! I told the idiot to fill the tank up with premium. Now I don't think the word premium sounds anything like the word regular. What was I supposed to do -- watch him put it in?

EVELYN (*backing down*) Don't know.

BERNIE: And furthermore -- I've known the difference between a girl and a woman for a very long time. (*exits to get her makeup case*)

EVELYN: Okay. (*picks up her suitcase, puts it on one of the beds. Unpacks everything; puts clothing into the chest of drawers. Takes an alarm clock, winds it, sets the time and the alarm and places it on table between the beds*)

BERNIE: (*enters with her make-up case and the transistor radio*) What are you doing?

(*EVELYN takes bathroom articles into the bathroom*)

EVELYN'S VOICE: Thought we might stay here for a few days. We're on vacation, aren't we?

BERNIE: I don't even know where we are. (*SHE enters*) Let's see the map?

(*EVELYN opens her makeup case, takes out a road map, and hands it to him. SHE also takes out a bottle of whiskey and two glasses*)

BERNIE: I don't know why you call that your makeup case.

EVELYN: Because that's what it is.

BERNIE: Then why don't you ever carry makeup in it?

EVELYN: There's no room! (*pours whiskey into two glasses*)

BERNIE: (*reads road map*) Where did you say we were?

EVELYN: I didn't. Happy Hour.

BERNIE: It's a little late for that, isn't it?

EVELYN: Never too late for happy hour. *(hands him his drink)*

BERNIE: I don't think so. My stomach's still a little sour.

EVELYN: More for me.

BERNIE: You could pour it back.

EVELYN: Read your map.

BERNIE: I would if I knew where we were.

EVELYN: Call the office and find out.

*(HE picks up telephone receiver, waits; pushes button up and down)*

BERNIE: Nothing's happening. *(pushes button up and down)* Why isn't anything happening?

EVELYN: Don't ask me. All I know is that we're stranded in some god-forsaken broken down motel without a restaurant within fifty miles.

BERNIE: I'm going to try dialing operator. *(HE dials. WE hear ringing though the wall)*

EVELYN: What's that?

BERNIE: That did it. It's ringing.

*(The phone stops ringing when the night clerk answers)*

EVELYN: It stopped. It came from over there. *(crosses to the wall to where the sound came from)*

BERNIE: (*into telephone*) I'm calling to find out where we are. I just checked in, 1A. I've got my map right in front of me. --What do you mean you're not on the map?

EVELYN: Figures.

BERNIE: Well, what's in between? Yeah, I found it -- okay, go on. -- How could that be, that's about a hundred miles from here. -- I don't know how good you have to be in geography to know where the hell you live on a map. What about something to eat around here? Where's your nearest restaurant, can you give me directions? -- Why not? -- Closed?! -- Did you know the TV doesn't work in here? How about giving us another one? Then how about giving us a discount on the room? Well, where is the manager? I'll give him a call -- Why not? -- Well, when can I reach him? -- Next month -- a lot of good that does me. (*slams receiver down*) -- That really burns me up!

EVELYN: So you're lost for the night somewhere in the state of South Dakota.

BERNIE: I'm not lost!

EVELYN: Do you know where you are? No. I don't care. But you do -- therefore you are lost and I am not.

BERNIE: If I had two or three glasses of whiskey, I wouldn't care where we were either.

EVELYN: I'm hungry. How about you? It's time for my emergency stash. (*opens her makeup case, takes out a paper bag that contains two sandwiches*)

BERNIE: What is it?

EVELYN: Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

BERNIE: Yeah, you might find out you want to give her back.

EVELYN: In about a New-York-Minute you're going to spend a cold, lonely night without dinner.

BERNIE: You'd let a poor old man starve.

EVELYN: Not if he sings for his supper, something short and sweet.

BERNIE: I'd like to know what I'm singing for.

EVELYN: Peanut butter and jelly -- and -- peanut butter and jelly.

BERNIE: What kind of jelly?

EVELYN: Sing. (*pours herself another drink*)

BERNIE: Where'd those sandwiches come from?

EVELYN: Wyoming.

BERNIE: Are they safe to eat?

EVELYN: You'll never know at the rate you're going.

BERNIE: (*sings*) SHE'S THE ROSE THAT GROWS  
IN NO-MAN'S LAND  
AND SHE'S BEAUTIFUL TO SEE  
SHE'S THE ONE RED ROSE  
A SOLDIER KNOWS  
IN MY GARDEN OF MEMORY  
-- IN MY GARDEN OF MEMORY --  
I can't remember the rest of it.

EVELYN: Tough titty!

BERNIE: Forget it. (*opens his suitcase, looks for his pajamas. Finds the bottoms, continues to look for the top*)

EVELYN: No sulking.

BERNIE: Who's sulking? I'm looking for my pajamas.

(*WE hear, the song, "THEN YOU CAN TELL ME GOOD-BYE" coming through the wall*)

EVELYN: What's that noise?

BERNIE: I don't hear anything.

EVELYN: Turn up your hearing aid.

BERNIE: I can hear just fine.

EVELYN: (*crosses toward the music*) It's coming from over here. Somebody must be having a party.

BERNIE: I'll call the office. (*lifts receiver, dials*) He sure does take his time answering this phone.

EVELYN: Is the office on the other side of this wall?

BERNIE: I think so.

EVELYN: Then the music is coming from the office.

BERNIE: Music? (*into telephone*) What's that noise? Sounds like it's coming from your office. (*to EVELYN*) He says it is coming from his office. (*into telephone*) How about turning it down. Okay? (*hanging up phone*) Did he turn it down?

EVELYN: If you'd turn up your hearing aid like I told you, you could hear for yourself. I don't know why you spent all that money on a hearing aid if you're not going to wear it. You're hard enough to live with -- let alone if you're going deaf.

BERNIE: I hear everything I want to hear.

EVELYN: Even your nose brother, Seymour, wears his hearing aid.

BERNIE: So? He's not married to you!

EVELYN: I wouldn't marry that leech if he was the last man on earth -- You have it with you?

BERNIE: No, I don't have it with me. I don't even know where it is.

EVELYN: It's right here!! (*takes hearing aid out of her makeup case*)

BERNIE: What the hell is it doing in there?

EVELYN: Waiting for you to put it on.

BERNIE: Well, I guess it has a long wait. Now do you mind if I listen to the news? (*turns on the radio, there is no sound*)

EVELYN: Go right ahead. I'm going to have my dinner. (*unwraps one of the sandwiches and eats*)

BERNIE: Now what?

EVELYN: It needs new batteries.

BERNIE: Now she tells me. (*opens back of radio*) It doesn't have any batteries in it at all. I don't suppose you have any batteries in your makeup case?

EVELYN: What would I be doing with batteries in my makeup case?

BERNIE: You carry everything else in there -- how's that sandwich?

EVELYN: It stinks.

BERNIE: When do I get mine?

EVELYN: Never.

BERNIE: I better take my medicine first.

EVELYN: I thought you took it. I brought you a glass of water two hours ago.

BERNIE: I don't feel so hot.

EVELYN: Where's your medication?

BERNIE: You said it was in your purse.

EVELYN: That was before I took it out and gave it to you. What did you do with it?

BERNIE: I never saw it.

EVELYN: You're getting too old for me. I think you're ready to be taken to the dumpster.

BERNIE: Will you please help me find my pills?

EVELYN: I'm eating my dinner. Look in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom.

BERNIE: I haven't even been in the bathroom since we got here.

EVELYN: Are you bragging or complaining. -- What's that on the television set?

BERNIE: *(crosses to TV set, picks up bottle of pills)* How'd they get over here?

EVELYN: Beats me. *(picking up what was BERNIE'S glass of water, SHE drinks)*

BERNIE: I think you're drinking my water.

EVELYN: Finders keepers, losers, weepers. There's another glass in the bathroom.

## **End of FreeRead**

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