

Bernie and the Beast

Marsha Sheiness





ArtAge supplies books, plays, and materials to older performers around the world. Directors and actors have come to rely on our 30+ years of experience in the field to help them find useful materials and information that makes their productions stimulating, fun, and entertaining.

ArtAge's unique program has been featured in Wall Street Journal, LA Times, Chicago Tribune, American Theatre, Time Magazine, Modern Maturity, on CNN, NBC, and in many other media sources.

ArtAge is more than a catalog. We also supply information, news, and trends on our top-rated website, www.seniortheatre.com. We stay in touch with the field with our very popular e-newsletter, Senior Theatre Online. Our President, Bonnie Vorenberg, is asked to speak at conferences and present workshops that supplement her writing and consulting efforts. We're here to help you be successful in Senior Theatre!

We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!

ArtAge Publications
Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President
PO Box 19955
Portland OR 97280
503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998
bonniev@seniortheatre.com
www.seniortheatre.com

NOTICE

Copyright: This play is fully protected under the Copyright Laws of the United States of America, Canada, and all other countries of the Universal Copyright Convention.

The laws are specific regarding the piracy of copyrighted materials. Sharing the material with other organizations or persons is prohibited. Unlawful use of a playwright's work deprives the creator of his or her rightful income.

Cast Copies: Performance cast copies are required for each actor, director, stage manager, lighting and sound crew leader.

Changes to Script: Plays must be performed as written. Any alterations, additions, or deletions to the text must be approved.

Permission to Film: Rights to produce, film, or record, in whole or in part, in any medium or in any language, by any group amateur or professional, are fully reserved.

Royalty: Royalties are due when you perform the play for any audience, paying or non-paying, professional or amateur. This includes readings, cuttings, scenes, and excerpts.

The royalty for amateur productions of this show is posted online. It is payable two weeks prior to your production. Contact us for professional rates or other questions. Royalty fees are subject to change.

Insert the following paragraph in your programs:

Performed with special permission from ArtAge Publications' Senior Theatre Resource Center at 800-858-4998, www.seniortheatre.com.

Copyright 2013

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 nosey 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

You can tell that the show is quite wonderful! Order your copy to read the complete script.