

BEAUTY, BRAINS AND PERSONALITY

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Emmett Loverde

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BEAUTY, BRAINS AND PERSONALITY

By Emmett Loverde

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 WOMEN)

Lynette Price 33 years old. *(176 lines)*

Bonnie Marshall 30 years old. *(160 lines)*

Candace Waterman 24 years old. *(132 lines)*

SETTING

The living room/dining alcove of LYNETTE PRICE'S very-cute one-bedroom apartment in the Westwood section of Los Angeles.

TIME: The present.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author suggests that if the play is being performed more than once, and if the actors are willing, that they alternate roles for different performances, perhaps even by drawing character names out of a hat.

This play is also available in a two-act version.

SCENE ONE

SCENE:

About a quarter to eight on a Friday evening in September. This is the living room/dining alcove of LYNETTE PRICE'S very-cute one-bedroom apartment in the Westwood section of Los Angeles. Clearly visible is the front door. A short hallway leads to a bedroom, bathroom, and closet. There is a doorway to a small kitchen.

AT RISE:

The stage is empty. Suddenly someone POUNDS on the front door. LYNETTE dashes in. She is 33, very attractive and intelligent, with a good figure that she dresses to hide for some unfathomable reason. She is a bit on the tall side.

LYNETTE: Just a second!

She opens the door and in stumbles BONNIE, looking awful.

LYNETTE: (Gasps.) Honey, what happened?

BONNIE: I was robbed.

LYNETTE: Where - - on the street? In the elevator?

BONNIE: Last night in my apartment.

LYNETTE: My god - - sit down! I'm calling the police!

LYNETTE grabs the telephone.

BONNIE: Maybe you'd better wait - -

The doorbell RINGS.

CANDACE: (From off-stage.) Hello-hello!

LYNETTE: (Yanks door open.) We've got an emergency - - I'm calling the police!

CANDACE enters carrying a bag of salad fixings and dressings.

BONNIE: Wait till I fix my make-up!

CANDACE: Wha - - what happened??

LYNETTE: Bonnie was robbed last night.

CANDACE: Didn't you phone the police *last night*??

BONNIE: They wouldn't let me call from the ambulance.

LYNETTE: What were you doing in an ambulance??

BONNIE: They had to get me to a hospital to take out the shrapnel.

CANDACE: Shrapnel???

BONNIE: It's all right, honey, I'm much better. The staples are holding.

LYNETTE: Eiw - - why did they staple you?

BONNIE: The little girl needed a kidney, and she and I were a match.

CANDACE: You donated one of your *kidneys*?? That's . . . that's so . . .

LYNETTE: Out of character.

BONNIE: A lot has changed since I saw the angel.

LYNETTE hangs up the telephone.

CANDACE: Ooooh - - a real angel?

BONNIE: Uh-huh. She had this great dress - - Dior, I think.

LYNETTE: Angel, huh?

BONNIE: She was very cute. All glowy.

LYNETTE: Okay Bonnie, you have my sympathy and my admiration.

What do you need - - money?

BONNIE: No, your apartment.

LYNETTE: My apartment?? Why do you need my *apartment*?

BONNIE: I have a date, silly!

LYNETTE: You also have your own apartment!

BONNIE: I want this guy to think I'm smart.

CANDACE: You are smart.

BONNIE: I'm savvy. Big difference.

LYNETTE: How would my apartment make you look smart?

BONNIE: It's got "smart" things. Smart posters. Smart furniture.

(Picks up a recorder.) Look at this flute thing! No *normal* person can play something like this!

LYNETTE: It was an heirloom.

BONNIE: Say that again?

LYNETTE: An heirloom.

BONNIE: (*Pronouncing it:*) Heir-loom. Heirloom. "Look. This precious flute thing is a heirloom."

LYNETTE: An heirloom.

BONNIE: "An heirloom." (*Titters.*) "Oh Darling, of course I don't play it! This is an artifact from the underclass, like a peasant skirt or a Honda. Playing it is a lost art."

CANDACE: No - - you can take a class down at the Y.

BONNIE: What's a "Y"?

CANDACE: It's where I take knitting and macramé and scrapbooking.

LYNETTE: Sure, Bon, learn to play the heirloom at the Y.

BONNIE: Learning things takes too long.

LYNETTE: Is this your first date?

BONNIE: Third.

CANDACE: Third date with the same guy??? *Congratulations!!*

BONNIE: Ow.

CANDACE: No but you just . . . I mean you always say . . . Third dates seem hard for you.

LYNETTE: Ow.

CANDACE: It's not that men don't want to go out with you - -

LYNETTE: She means that you seem easily bored.

BONNIE: Like you two never get bored?

LYNETTE: Men don't bore me simply because I never actually meet any. Candy-The-Curvees-girl, on the other hand, has guys all over her constantly - -

CANDACE: Not "constantly"!

LYNETTE: - - so she probably can't tell one from the next.

CANDACE: Not constantly!

BONNIE: Not *constantly!* Anyway, he's totally cute and I really want to impress him. Our first two dates were out on the town, so now I'm going to show him my domestic side.

LYNETTE: You don't have a domestic side.

BONNIE: Exactly. I'm taking yours.

CANDACE: Who is this guy? Ooh - - is it the one who works on the twenty-first floor?

BONNIE: I'm so over him.

LYNETTE: Eighteenth floor?

BONNIE: Like kissing Scooby-Doo.

CANDACE: The hunk from the mailroom?

BONNIE: Like I would do the mailroom.

LYNETTE: But - -

BONNIE: We agreed that never happened!

LYNETTE: Wait - - is this the guy we met at that party last weekend?

BONNIE: Which one?

LYNETTE: The tall one?

BONNIE: No - - which party?

LYNETTE: The only one I went to. This one guy I met - -

BONNIE: Poor thing - - you only met one?

LYNETTE: Only one I liked. The photographer.

BONNIE: *That's* why he kept staring at me with bridal lust!

CANDACE: You mean "unbridled lust"?

BONNIE: Whatever. I almost slapped him.

LYNETTE: He was staring at you? (*Airily.*) He gave *me* his card.

BONNIE: He gave you his card? That's so cheesy. I always make a man write out his number. He's gotta work for it.

LYNETTE: And now you're on your third date. Is he rich enough?

BONNIE: No, but he's cute! For me, old-fashioned values still count.

CANDACE: But how will Linnie's smart apartment impress this guy?

BONNIE: He'll glance around here and figure I don't need him.

LYNETTE: My apartment says I don't need men?

BONNIE: Well do you?

LYNETTE: Not right now, but - -

BONNIE: See? And this place reeks of that!

CANDACE: Bonnie, she's working on a PhD!

BONNIE: Exactly.

LYNETTE: Educated women don't need men?

BONNIE: You haven't had a boyfriend since I've known you.

LYNETTE: I'm a grad student! There's no time!

BONNIE: Fine, but you talk so much about . . . whatever it is you study that I could write a desecration of my own!

CANDACE: I brought three kinds of dressing!

BONNIE: Are these leftovers from Curvees?

CANDACE: It's my night off. I made them myself!

LYNETTE: Well I'm starving!

CANDACE puts the salad and dressings on the dining room table.

CANDACE: I have Light Italian, honey-mustard, and strawberry-pistachio.

BONNIE: Strawberry-pistachio? Is that a recipe?

CANDACE: It's an accident. (*Hopefully.*) But it's not bad.

LYNETTE: I'm sure it's delicious, Candy.

They sit down to eat.

BONNIE: How'd you come up with "strawberry-pistachio"?

CANDACE: Well, I love peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and I'd just finished making one and the jelly jar was teetering on the edge of the counter and I - -

BONNIE: Instead of inflicting this horrible dressing on us, why didn't you just throw it away?

LYNETTE: She's frugal. (*To CANDACE.*) It's not horrible. It's actually really good.

BONNIE: You force us to eat something that's most likely poisonous because you're *frugal*? How did you know the strawberries and the nuts wouldn't have some deadly chemical reaction like when you mix drain cleaners?

LYNETTE: When did you ever touch drain cleaner?

BONNIE: Never. I read about it in "News of the Weird." Some lady died.

CANDACE: It's not poisonous. I think it's fun.

LYNETTE: It *is* fun. Taste it, Bon.

BONNIE: (*Tastes it.*) Damn it! It's delicious.

CANDACE: You like it?

BONNIE: I said it's delicious. I hate it.

LYNETTE: Why do you hate it?

BONNIE: Why does she always have to be creative?

LYNETTE: It's who she is. Hey - - why don't you borrow Candy's apartment for your date?

CANDACE: Uh . . .

BONNIE: God no!

LYNETTE: Guys love creative women! And Candy has fun things like scratch-and-sniff wallpaper - -

CANDACE: Oh, I wore that out.

LYNETTE: Your books, then. You've got books from all over the world. I didn't know there was more than one version of *Cinderella!*

CANDACE: Oh yeah - - the Brothers Grimm version was called *Ashputtel*. I think there's also one called *Cinder-Wench*.

LYNETTE: See, Bonnie? This guy would fall in love with you if you were Candy!

CANDACE: Why don't you want him to see *your* apartment?

BONNIE: Well I'm hardly ever there. And it's such a mess. And so small.

LYNETTE: Mine's small. Candy's is small.

BONNIE: But all your things are small, too. I have big things. No, it's got to be yours, Lynette. He's got to think I'm indifferent of him.

LYNETTE: Indifferent *to* him.

BONNIE: Yeah, that.

CANDACE: Have you guys ever thought about getting a place together - - the three of us? (*BONNIE and LYNETTE stare at her in horror.*) Just a thought.

BONNIE: Look, this will just be for one night. I'll even wash your sheets. One look at this place and he'll think I'm so liberated he'll try to stifle me.

LYNETTE: And stifling is something you *want*?

BONNIE: Duh!

LYNETTE: (*Shrugs.*) Glad I could help.

BONNIE: Candy actually has a point. About the three of us. Living together could be fun. We three contradict each other pretty well.

LYNETTE: No we don't!

CANDACE: You mean we *complement* each other?

BONNIE: Don't go overboard.

CANDACE: Each of our strengths fills in a weakness of the other two?

BONNIE: I just mean together we make a pretty good woman.

LYNETTE: Separately we make good women.

BONNIE: But together - - the three of us - - make the *ideal* woman!

LYNETTE: Why does it take three?

CANDACE: I think I get what she means. We're sort of like the witches in *Macbeth* - -

BONNIE: I don't see foreign films. Look, the perfect woman has three things: beauty, brains, and personality.

CANDACE: Are those "ideal"?

LYNETTE: There's only three?

BONNIE: Between us we have all three.

CANDACE: Honey, that's so sweet!

LYNETTE: We do have a lot of fun together.

BONNIE: Lynette is the brains, Candy's the personality, and *I'm* the beauty! (*You couldn't even carve through the tension with a chainsaw.*) Don't you think?

CANDACE: How about I bring out the chicken?

LYNETTE: (*Staring at BONNIE.*) I'm sorry, what?

CANDACE: That's what you made, right? Chicken?

LYNETTE: (*Still staring at BONNIE.*) Chicken?

CANDACE: I could go get some take-out - -

LYNETTE: Don't leave me alone with her!

BONNIE: It's not like I'm saying something bad! Come on! Candy has personality! Everybody loves her! And you - - your school thing! You're all smart! And me . . . I get a lot of attention.

LYNETTE: Candy gets attention. I get attention.

BONNIE: I mean from men.

CANDACE: Maybe we should change the subject.

LYNETTE: I'm just so upset I don't know what to say.

CANDACE: You don't really mean all this, do you, Bon-Bon?

BONNIE: Sure I do.

LYNETTE: It's like a monkey playing with dynamite.

BONNIE: It's a compliment!

LYNETTE: That you think you're prettier than us? That's a compliment?

BONNIE: No, that I think you're smarter than us! And Candy's got more personality!

LYNETTE: But you don't care about brains or personality.

BONNIE: I clearly don't need them. But where would you two be?

LYNETTE: Need them to what?

BONNIE: I don't know. Get a guy?

LYNETTE: You're only on your third date.

BONNIE: So we're all works-in-progress. I'm just farther along. Don't try to tell me a man wouldn't make you feel more complete.

LYNETTE: All your men don't complete you!

BONNIE: You know you're both looking for men. And right now you are simply making yourselves into the type of women you think your ideal men want.

CANDACE: I'm just living my life!

BONNIE: You take knitting and macramé and scrapbooking at the Y! That's so cute! Guys love that stuff.

CANDACE: There are no guys in those classes.

BONNIE: But you have fun ideas. There's things on your wall that *you* made and drew and painted! That turns men on. (*To LYNETTE.*) You want a smart guy. Where else are you going to meet him but at a college for smart people?

LYNETTE: I go to school to learn, not meet smart guys. I'd like a decent man . . . at some point. He doesn't have to be smart.

BONNIE: Then why didn't you marry Billy from the hardware store?

LYNETTE: Bobby. I didn't want to!

BONNIE: Because he only worked in a hardware store!

LYNETTE: Because he styled his hair with a toilet brush! And his name was "Bobby."

CANDACE: Toilet brush bristles are stiffer.

LYNETTE: What kind of man *do* you want?

BONNIE: Rich. What else?

LYNETTE: Then why do you pursue gorgeous men?

BONNIE: The gorgeous are more likely to be rich. Ask Darwin.

CANDACE: I actually heard that on the news.

BONNIE: And more of us are famous, too.

LYNETTE: "Us"? "Us" gorgeous people?

BONNIE: Okay, *we* gorgeous people. Satisfied?

LYNETTE: Not till you apologize.

BONNIE: For what?

CANDACE: Saying we're ugly.

The smoke alarm GOES OFF in the kitchen.

LYNETTE: Oh god, the chicken! This isn't over!

LYNETTE runs into the kitchen, which is now full of smoke.

BONNIE: Hurry back - - I haven't even told you guys what happened on my date! (*CANDACE gathers up her things to leave.*) What are you doing?

CANDACE: I'm going to go.

BONNIE: She'll be right back. I'm sure she didn't mean to ruin it - - can you hold on a second?

CANDACE: Yeah . . . no. (*Opens front door.*) Tell her I'm sorry. I just . . . I need to go. Tell her to call me later. (*Exits.*)

LYNETTE: (*Re-enters.*) Well, take-out it is. Where's Candy?

BONNIE: She left. What did you say to her?

LYNETTE: Was she upset?

BONNIE: She wanted to go before *you* got back.

LYNETTE: Oh God, she's furious at me! Should I call her?

BONNIE: I don't know if that's a good idea. You can be really harsh sometimes.

LYNETTE: I feel like I ruined the party!

BONNIE: Well . . . when you say something like "I'm so upset I don't know what to say," that does put a damper on it.

BONNIE exits. LYNETTE closes the door after her, disappointed. Lights down.

SCENE TWO

AT RISE:

The same, one month later, evening. LYNETTE'S apartment has a better set of furniture and other expensive new touches. The doorbell RINGS. LYNETTE opens the door for CANDACE, who carries a bag of take-out from "Curvees" restaurant. They hug.

LYNETTE: Hello, you!

CANDACE: Here you go. Fresh from the world-famous kitchens of Curvees. Hey - - I love what you've done with this place.

LYNETTE: (*Feigning innocence:*) I just vacuumed.

CANDACE: That's not the same couch.

LYNETTE shrugs. An awkward moment.

LYNETTE: Do you miss her?

CANDACE: Me? Absolutely not! Sure I wonder how she's doing and all, but I don't *miss* her! (*A beat.*) Do you miss her?

LYNETTE: Me? No. Except sometimes.

CANDACE: Yeah. Sometimes.

A cooking timer DINGS in the kitchen.

LYNETTE: Ooh - - food. One second! (*Exits.*)

CANDACE hesitates, then clicks on the speakerphone and dials a local number. BONNIE'S VOICE is heard OVER.

BONNIE: (*Via phone.*) Hi. If you're male and you're looking for Bonnie, you may be in luck - -

CANDACE hangs up as LYNETTE returns with dishes of food.

LYNETTE: Oh . . . were you calling somebody?

CANDACE: My . . . florist. It's her birthday. Or was. Or will be.

LYNETTE: Shall we invite her over? I think we have enough for three.

CANDACE: I'm allergic to her. (*A CAR ALARM begins outside.*) Ooh - - mine. Be right back. (*CANDACE dashes out the front door. LYNETTE sneaks over and dials the speakerphone.*)

BONNIE: (*Via phone.*) You've reached the desk of Bonnie Marshall at Barking Parrot Development. I'm either on another line or away - -

The car alarm STOPS. LYNETTE hangs up the speakerphone.

CANDACE: (*Enters.*) That thing is so sensitive!

They sit down to eat. LYNETTE serves.

LYNETTE: Don't you sometimes wish she would just call up and apologize?

They share a hearty laugh: the very idea!

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